

THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME XXIII NUMBER 2 NEW SERIES 2002

INAUGURAL LECTURES

Exegesis as Prayer

C. CLIFTON BLACK

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Exegesis as Prayer

by C. CLIFTON BLACK

C. Clifton Black, Otto A. Piper Professor of Biblical Theology, is the author of numerous books and articles, including Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter (2001), and The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts (2001). He delivered this inaugural lecture in Miller Chapel on March 27, 2002.

ALL THAT I KNOW OF Otto Alfred Piper is based on what I have read by and about him, and on what has been reported by those who knew him. Regrettably for me, he retired from this seminary's faculty in 1962, when I was matriculating for the second grade. I wish I had known him, for he was a remarkable man. Just the stories of his life among us as minister, teacher, author, and friend could fill a Tolstovian tome. Otto Piper generated scores of essays and more than twenty books in three languages (German, French, and English). Lest you imagine him a scholar who never left his writing desk, consider the fact that Piper directed twenty-one out of the eighty-nine doctoral dissertations written at Princeton Seminary between 1944 and 1960. Ponder, moreover, that for the academic year 1942–43 alone, the Seminary catalogue lists these as his courses: Gospel History (a prescribed course for first-year students), the Synoptic Gospels (prescribed in the second year), Apostolic History (prescribed in the third); also the Parables of Jesus, the Gospel of John, Exegesis of Romans, Sacraments in the New Testament, The New Testament Interpretation of History, Biblical Theology of the New Testament—plus seminars on The Making of the New Testament and Methodology of New Testament Studies—for a total teaching load of twenty-two hours, an average of eleven hours in both semesters. In the face of such facts, I shall continue to whine about how hard I work, but perhaps not quite so often or convincingly. In his home at 58 Mercer Street, Otto and his wife Elizabeth customarily received students for tea every Friday afternoon. On one such occasion, as the professor enjoyed telling the story, the family's big black cat, Hidi, leaped on a visitor's lap and proceeded to stir the man's tea with its tail. Too timid to ask for another cup, the guest drank the tea, with no ill effects. Allegedly, Piper himself was the farthest thing from pompous. Legend has it that a student once tempted him with the question: "Dr. Piper, the followers of Hegel are called Hegelians, and those of Barth are called Barthians. What will your followers be called?" Said Piper to his Satan, "I'd call them damned fools."¹

¹ This anecdote and that of Hidi the cat were recounted, and later transcribed, by Piper's student Daniel J. Theron, at the dedication of two portraits of the professor by Eileen

I

In 1954 Otto Piper published his assessment of "The Biblical Doctrine of Prayer," in an essay entitled "Praise of God and Thanksgiving."² Embedded in its first paragraph is the opening statement of his study's refrain: in contrast with other ancient prayers, as well as with contemporary Christian practice, biblical prayer is not anthropocentric, but rather theocentric:

In modern Protestantism prayer is often interpreted as a dialogue between father and child, based upon the assumption that man is on a par with God. No wonder that it becomes fully man-centered, that is, a means of acquiring peace of mind, and that adoration is no longer practiced. Things are quite different in the Bible. There the praise of God is the constitutive factor of all prayer (3).

Piper considers two closely related, complex dimensions of the praise of God. First, there is adoration, which is conveyed in such biblical verbs as *barakh*, (ברך, "bless"), *eulogeo* (εὐλογέω, "praise"), and *doxazo* (δοξάζω, "glorify"). Working from exegesis of Genesis (1:22; 27:1-41) and Ephesians (1:3, 13), Piper argues that "*barakh* designates an act, by which the evaluation of another being is expressed by transmitting to him a highly precious gift, as a result of which the recipient partakes of the donor's specific power of blessing" (5).³ The primary agent of all benediction is God: it is God's initiatory blessing of us that evokes from us a reciprocating ability to bless God. Because of the term's dilution in modern usage, Piper steers between the Scylla of magic and the Charybdis of rationalism. On the one side, biblical blessing is not a manipulative act by which human beings confer on earthly objects supernatural qualities.⁴ On the other, adoration is not equiv-

Mary Fabian. The rest of this paragraph's information comes from an anonymous memorial tribute, "Otto Alfred Piper 1981-1982," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* n. s. 4 (1983): 52-5. I am grateful to the Reverend William O. Harris, Librarian for Archives and Special Collections of the Seminary Libraries, for providing me with much valuable information about Professor Piper.

² Otto A. Piper, "Praise and Thanksgiving: The Biblical Doctrine of Prayer (I)," *Interpretation* 8 (1954): 3-20. Hereafter, page references to quotations from this article are cited parenthetically within the text.

³ So far as I can tell, recent Old Testament scholarship has not drastically veered from this interpretation of *barakh* / ברך, except to pay more explicit attention to its converse, the curse. See Josef Scharbert, "ברך," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 2 (1975): 279-308; Patrick D. Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 282-303.

⁴ Against Piper, subsequent scholarship tends to acknowledge magical features in the early stages of Old Testament blessing: thus, Scharbert, "ברך," 304; Miller, *They Cried to the Lord*, 283-90; most emphatically, Claus Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 53-9.

alent with an expression of aesthetic admiration, whereby a human standard of evaluation is applied to an object. Rather, in blessing us God transforms us into beings that partake of the divine nature, "the earthly evidence of [God's own] glory . . . as a result of which all the values which we knew previously no less than our former standard of values, have lost their finality" (5-6). Characteristic of that transformation is its assignment of us as God's chosen people and its all-encompassing engagement of our selves, in the totality of our lives for as long as we live:

"Bless the LORD, O *my soul*, and *all that is within me*, bless his holy name" (Ps 103:1; RSV).

"I bless the LORD *at all times*; praise of Him is *ever* in my mouth (Ps 34:1; NJPS).

To these instances, quoted with emphasis by Piper, one could add Paul's famous exhortations in 1 Thessalonians 5 (16-18a): "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in every circumstance." For the Apostle and the Psalmist, all that they do is with permanent awareness that God's gracious approach to them has created a transformed relationship with God that empowers the divine gift to be returned to its Giver in the form of human praise.

Acknowledging themselves as beneficiaries of God's activity, notably at Creation and in Covenant, human beings indicate the object of their adoration and its reasons.⁵ "God is worshipped because he has revealed himself as God to the believers, and not because the believer thinks it is good and useful for man to have religion" (9). By these works, God manifests himself as superior in love, "a God who distributes out of an infinite and inexhaustible abundance" (10), and reliably purposeful (Ps 104:24; Rom 16:25-27; Eph 1:3-14; Col 1:15-20; 1 Tim 3:16). As Second Isaiah anticipates in Israel's restoration (Isa 40:27, 31) and as the Fourth Evangelist makes explicit through Jesus' own passion (John 8:54; 12:23, 28; 13:3; 14:13; 15:8), the divine plan is paradoxically realized through humiliation, suffering, and death.⁶ Thus is revealed God's holiness, the essential quality belonging to the LORD alone (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8): "In the Trisagion . . . [t]he seraphim disclose

⁵ Whether Israelite praise is rooted as firmly in its view of creation as in its interpretation of history remains debatable (Scharbert, "ברך," 306-7). Miller points up the fundamental social location of praise within the family (*They Cried to the Lord*, 281-3).

⁶ For recent studies of Israel's attempt to square its praise of God with human suffering, consult Patrick D. Miller, "Enthroned on the Praises of Israel: The Praise of God in Old Testament Theology," *Interpretation* 39 (1985): 5-19; Walter Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Samuel E. Ballentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 199-224.

the secret of created life, that is, that only God's holiness is capable of imparting meaning to all that exists and lives" (11). By that standard, in the opening *berakha* of 2 Corinthians (1:3-12) Paul is able to measure the true value of a suffering apostleship to a suffering church. Hardship is not thereby trivialized or explained away; it becomes a praiseworthy demonstration of our communion with the suffering Christ who is simultaneously the risen Lord of compassionate consolation. In that connection, interestingly, Piper suggests that "the formula 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' does not by itself predicate God as dealing with us in a fatherly way, but rather denotes that through contact with Christ we have experienced God's glory" (13). At stake in the New Testament's use of paternal language (as Piper regards it) is neither a generic appellation or alias for God, nor a merely metaphysical statement about Jesus' relationship with God, but rather a claim about believers' revived relationship with their Creator through Christ: God's self-revelation to us of glory (John 14:9; cf. 2 Cor 4:6) and God's regeneration in us of new life (1 Pet 1:3-9).

The second dimension of God's praise is thanksgiving (*yadah* / ידה [hifil]; *homologeo* / ὁμολογέω; *exhomologeo* / ἑξομολογέω). Piper grants that there is little material difference in the Bible between praise of God and thanksgiving (15); *todah* / תורה reinforces the theological tendencies already witnessed. The Giver to whom believers are indebted is revealed by those gifts as unstintingly generous: the One whose astonishing graciousness in the past stimulates praise for providence still to come, whose assurance is firm (Pss 85, 111, 118; 136; Matt 11:25; Eph 1:3; Rev 11:17-18). The true estimate of God's gifts of election, redemption, and steadfast love is reckoned in relation to God's saving purposes. Thus, such Psalms as 111 and 138, as well as the Lukan Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) and Benedictus (1:58-79), model genuine thanksgiving: "When we recall the whole work of God we are able also to appraise correctly the value and function of the things which happen to us" (18), including both our amenities and misfortunes (Ps 84; Rom 8:28-39; 2 Cor 2:14-16; Phil 3:7-8). Unlike the modern emphasis on our subjective happiness and the value we ascribe to a donation, biblical figures like Mary and Zechariah efface themselves before the gift, extolling God—the sovereign, free, and munificent Lord—with due praise for unbelievable privileges of which they know themselves in no way deserving.⁷ Typically, we are blind to countless evidences of God's grace; by nature, we are so dull and rebellious of heart that we take for granted our creation, preservation, and salvation as entitlements (cf. Ps 103:2; Isa 40:21; Rom 1:21). In the biblical tradition it is

⁷ Piper's recurring uneasiness with human emotions attending Israel's praise and thanks is not easily sustained by many Old Testament texts: P 9:2; Isa 12:6; Jer 33:10-11, among others. See G. Mayer, "ידה," *TDOT* 5 (1986): 427-43, esp. 434-5.

different: believers “do not look at the universe and its fate from the angle of their personal interests, but rather contemplate it as it appears in the light of God’s will” (20). In that light, things of apparent insignificance become good and valuable when dedicated to God’s design; conversely, things of highest aesthetic or utilitarian value are not only worthless but dangerous if by our lack of praise we leave them unrelated to God’s purposeful love (17, citing 1 Tim 4:4–5).

The prayer of thanksgiving is the test of our faith. In it we make manifest whether or not we acknowledge God as the giver of all things; by it we show whether or not we place the spiritual benefits which Christ offers to us infinitely high above all earthly things; and in its light it becomes evident whether or not we believe that, being one with our Lord, we are able to triumph over all evils. . . . By combining thanksgiving with the praise of God, the Bible teaches us genuine gratitude (19, 20).

How well does Otto Piper’s treatment of praise and thanksgiving wear after forty-eight years? While a thorough assessment is inappropriate here, a few observations may be worth registering. One of his primary claims—that blessing is God’s gracious preservation of life, which needy humans must constantly receive and ask for—has not, I judge, been overturned.⁸ That said, I am struck by the degree of unity Piper finds in the biblical witness. As signaled by his essay’s subtitle, “The Biblical *Doctrine* of Prayer” (emphasis added), Piper’s inclination—typical of the post-war Biblical Theology Movement of which he was a leader—is to highlight theological unity not only between but also within the Testaments.⁹ After five decades of countervailing encouragement to discern difference and diversity within the canon, such an approach no longer comes as reflexively to me or possibly to many of us here.¹⁰ While every instance of correspondence may not be equally persuasive, I am prepared nevertheless to confess the blinkered vision of the historical moment that I inhabit, and to acknowledge the contribution to theological reflection of Piper’s more synthetic, less analytical, approach.

⁸ See, for instance, Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 54–5.

⁹ Elsewhere Piper wrote, “The history of exegesis has shown that no adequate understanding of the Bible or any of its parts is possible which is not based upon the . . . [axiom that] underlying the whole Bible there is one message—the substantial unity of the canon of the Bible” (“How I Study My Bible,” *The Christian Century* 63 [March 6, 1946]: 299–301 [here, 299]).

¹⁰ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), remains the standard chronicle of the Biblical Theology Movement and its dissolution. Scharbert (“ברך,” 284–308) offers a temperate consideration of the complex development of blessing within Israelite religion and theology.

At the beginning of his essay, Piper makes an interesting yet contestable move. From his initial premise that God distinctively occupies the center of biblical prayer, he draws the conclusion that "the praise of God is the constitutive factor of all prayer." Here, three questions arise at once. First, even if one grants the theocentricity of biblical prayer, it does not therefore follow that "the constitutive factor of all biblical prayer" must be that of *praise*. Theologically, I would prefer it that way; exegetically, there are other possibilities, as we shall see. Second, is it the case that ancient prayers outside the Bible, if not lacking adoration, are at root anthropocentric? The ancient evidence is mixed but tilts away from Piper's judgment, for reasons that in the early 1950s he could not have known, or at least could not have fully realized. In a recent study, Oxford's Simon Pulleyn upholds a scholarly consensus "that prayers of gratitude are not very frequent in archaic and classical Greece and that when one does find them, they are not particularly effusive."¹¹ On the other hand, we now know from the Essene psalter and such works as *Words of the Luminaries* (4Q504) and *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400–407) that praise is the dominant motif of many prayers at Qumran—so much so that the joining of earthly and angelic praise of God is a recurring theme in that community's *Daily Prayers* (4Q503).¹² Third, taken on their own terms, the psalms of the Old Testament exhibit an oscillation between lament and praise, petition, and thanksgiving.¹³ As our colleague Professor Miller has observed, "Praise, therefore, does not really stand by itself. . . . There is some sense in which praise is the end of the conversation" between God and humanity—not the beginning of a non-dialogical hymn, as Piper would have it.¹⁴ At any rate, biblical prayer embraces many dimensions of human need and desire: praise and thanksgiving to be sure, but also lament, petition,

¹¹ S. J. Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 39–55 (here, 39). In the vast mass of personal inscriptions accompanying votive sacrifices, Pulleyn finds the closest equivalent to Israel's praise of the LORD; nevertheless, "[Greek] Prayer was not of itself an autonomous mode of religious action" (15).

¹² Eileen M. Schuller, "Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament*, ed. R. N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 66–88; see also James H. Charlesworth, *Critical Reflections on the Odes of Solomon* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 14–77. Distinguishing the biblical witness from its Near Eastern matrix was peculiarly important to the Biblical Theology Movement in America (Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, 47–50).

¹³ Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).

¹⁴ Miller, *They Cried to the Lord*, 223. Piper's view seems more reminiscent of Abraham Joshua Heschel: "I am not ready to accept the ancient concept of prayer as a dialogue. Who are we to enter a dialogue with God? The better metaphor would be to describe prayer as an act of immersion, . . . drowned in the waters of [God's] mercy" ("Prayer as Discipline," in idem., *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* [New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966], 255).

intercession, and confession.¹⁵ Certainly, within the Old Testament Psalter pleas for help outnumber hymns and thanksgivings by a considerable margin.

Less in critique, more in observation, I think it fair to say that what Piper gave us in 1954 was not so much an analysis of any prayer in the Bible, as it was, instead, the beginning of a theology of prayer, grounded in the biblical witness and weighted towards the New Testament. Whether or not he intended it, Piper's essay reads as an erudite meditation¹⁶ on the majestic themes of Ephesians 1:3-14: the eternal reciprocity of creative blessing, initiated by "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," whose magnificently loving plan for us evokes our rapt thanksgiving and places in context "the sufferings of this present time" (Rom 8:18). From that hub, Piper reaches out towards other biblical testimonies, insightfully drawing them into the orbit of his confession—which, as he repeatedly notes, is "an act of faith" that "fills one with joy" (7, 16-7, 18, 20). Indeed, throughout this article, the veil between Professor Piper, the learned exegete, and Otto Piper, the believing Christian, becomes so transparent that it is practically impossible to differentiate them, perhaps even reprehensible to try:

We have not understood God's purpose in revealing himself as long as we are not moved by our insights to praise him (6).

Hence an unbelievable privilege has been granted to us (16). . . . [Through Christ] we have the forgiveness of sins. Thereby we are enabled to live in the Messianic age, and the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts (18).

God takes a personal interest in our lives, and thus indicates the high price he sets on us. Yet we do not therefore live for our own sake. The meaning of our life consists in the fact that we were made sons *eis auton* (Eph 1:5), that is, for God's sake.

The only thing conspicuously lacking from Piper's presentation of the "Praise of God and Thanksgiving" is that motto which Bach affixed to the end of his compositions: *Soli Deo gloria*, To God alone be glory. If you suppose I say that in ridicule, you could not more grossly mistake my intention. By my lights, this is the enduring merit of Otto Piper's essay, which was but a particle of his comprehensive work and life among us: in the very act of biblical interpretation, Professor Piper was encouraging us to bless and adore the LORD. For him,

¹⁵ As, in a companion piece to Piper's essay, Floyd V. Filson investigated: "Petition and Intercession: The Biblical Doctrine of Prayer (2)," *Interpretation* 8 (1954): 21-34. More recently, consult Miller, *They Cried to the Lord*, 55-134, 244-80.

¹⁶ In this article Piper offers not a single footnote or any reference to another scholar's work. Of such habits I have not yet managed to break myself.

prayer was not a religious auxiliary, a pietistic nod before getting down to the serious business of biblical exegesis. Of course, scriptural interpretation is serious—more so than we are always aware. It is also more joyful, for in Christ's resurrection God has had the last laugh.¹⁷ When proceeding in alignment with the same Spirit that animated scripture's creation and canonization within the church, *exegesis is an expression of prayer*. The glorification of God and the sanctification of life constitute the ultimate reason for scripture's interpretation, as for everything else that Christians are and do.

II

On its face, such a claim ought not be controversial. I have heard numerous offenses charged to the Apostle Paul's account; never have I heard anyone lambaste his counsel to the Corinthians, "So . . . whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). Who's going to argue with *that*? Well, in my experience a lot of people have, many of whom I regard as friends. Years ago at another seminary, a senior colleague drew me into his office to ask if the rumor was true: that I prayed at the beginning of a class. This Dutch uncle gave me to understand that such conduct was inappropriate, as it confused students whether they were in school or in church. Another colleague would visibly shudder at mere mention of the word "piety," having been scarred from years of classroom encounter with hearts strangely warmed and brains evidently lobotomized. Then there was the memorable lunch with a friend from my graduate-school days, at which—without a shred of malice—he expressed deep concern by the *harm* I did my students by suggesting that I believed the witness of the Bible I was training them to read with a critical eye. In other words, my responsibility was to teach students to analyze Psalm 119(:97)—"Oh, how I love your law! / all the day long it is in my mind"—while forestalling the prospect that anyone in my course would ever be caught uttering such a thing. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of my teacher, the church historian David Steinmetz: "Other generations were afraid of appearing 'loose'; we are fearful of being thought either 'morbid' or 'pious.' As sex was a taboo subject for our grandparents, so death and piety are taboo subjects with us."¹⁸

Throwing caution to the winds while building on Piper's foundation, I want to suggest some *dispositions* of prayer that I consider essential for the proper exegesis of scripture, understanding "propriety" as a manner of interpretive attunement that is congenial with scripture's own character, content, and com-

¹⁷ On "Basic Christian Existence as 'a Laugh,'" see Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford, *Praising and Knowing God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 71–88.

¹⁸ David C. Steinmetz, *Memory and Mission: Theological Reflections on the Christian Past* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 169. In the original, these sentences appear in reverse order.

pletion. At the outset let me be clear that I am *not* prescribing a particular form or language of prayer to which all interpreters must subscribe. With prayer, one size does not fit all, nor anyone at all times; as Dom John Chapman wisely counseled his correspondents, "Pray as you can, and do not try to pray as you can't."¹⁹ Nor am I equating "dispositions" with "moods" (which are sudden and spasmodic), even less with "methodological approaches" (which can prove intellectually vapid or morally vacuous).²⁰ By dispositions, I borrow a leaf—even as did my denominational father, John Wesley—from Jonathan Edwards, who discerned in persons graced by faith profound and enduring motives, "[the] more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will," that marshal human emotion, intellect, and will towards the moral excellence and supernal beauty of God.²¹ Saint Augustine, on whom Edwards was dependent, put the matter more concisely by describing prayer as "the affectionate reaching out of the mind for God."²² When the biblical interpreter mentally reaches out for God with affection, what capacities will be cultivated in that renewed mind for exegetical activation? As Edwards himself attempted a *via media* between rationalistic defense of decorous doctrine and revivalist claims for enthusiast experience, so shall I suggest a constant need in our day for better balance among goods that have become lopsided. In particular, I would propose three complementary and intersecting aptitudes, three prayerful dispositions, for the exegete in our time: a capacity for holiness, a transfigured affection, and a disposition for thankful praise.

"Who is like You, O LORD, majestic in holiness?"²³ A Disposition for Holiness

If Otto Piper was correct that "only God's holiness is capable of imparting meaning to all that exists and lives" (11), then we should regularly repent of

¹⁹ *The Spiritual Letters of Dom John Chapman*, ed. R. Hudleston (London: Sheed and Ward, 1935), 109.

²⁰ In "How I Study My Bible" (299), Piper observes, "Like the natural sciences and sociology, theological criticism is at present passing through what is aptly called 'the crisis of methodology'"—vindicating in 1946 the Preacher's lament that beneath the sun there is nothing new (Eccl 1:9–11).

²¹ Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 98. On the significance of Edwards's treatise for hermeneutics, see John E. Smith, "Jonathan Edwards: Piety and Its Fruits," in *The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Postcritical Scriptural Interpretation*, ed. P. Ochs (New York and Mahwah: Paulist, 1993), 277–91; for liturgy, Don E. Saliers, *The Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and the Religious Affections* (New York: Seabury, 1980).

²² Augustine, Sermon 9 (*de Passione*) 3 (*Oratio namque est mentis ad Deum affectuosa intentio*); cited by Thomas A. Hand, *Augustine on Prayer* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1986), 19 et passim. For a superb presentation of interpretive dispositions in Catholic perspective, see Mariano Magrassi, *Praying the Bible: An Introduction to Lectio Divina* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998), 57–101.

²³ Exodus 15:11 (adapted).

investing exegesis with cheap significance. Christians hold that Jesus of Nazareth is the apex of God's self-revelation; likewise, it has pleased God to "abbreviate" (Bernard of Clairvaux) or "accommodate" (Calvin) himself, through the testimony of scripture, to a measure accessible by mortals. That, like the Incarnation, should occasion greater wonder, not its diminution. Wonder, however, has receded into eclipse since the seventeenth century, as many interpreters have inflated their confidence in human abilities while truncating their intellectual tolerance for a reasoned faith.²⁴ The not-so-pretty pass to which things have come in 2002 is, I fear, perennial conclaves of masters of a page no longer sacred, mesmerized by technique, restless with a God-Idea while fearing real passion for God. The culprit in all this is *not*, as the fundamentalists think, the discipline of historical criticism, which, with its attendant flowering of philological and literary inquiry, is the most recent stage of the venerable quest for the Bible's literal sense.²⁵ *Scientia*, knowledge, is a noble gift of God, who is not well honored by ignorance and superstition. The problem, in my view, is that we have allowed ourselves to become arrested in "science" of a narrow sort and have forgotten—or dismissed—Augustine's realization that knowledge is but the third rung of a ladder whose first steps are the fear of God and a receptive spirit (*pietas*), as we climb to communion with God by way of fortitude, mercy, love for our enemies, and wisdom (*De doctrina christiana* 2.7.9–11). In Eden, the original sin was of knowledge embezzled (Gen 3); as Paul reminded Corinth (1 Cor 8:1–13), to be stuck in knowledge while lacking love is no sign of Christian hygiene. Few spectacles are more ridiculous, or more pathetic, than a seminar whose members beat hell into one another over differing interpretations of the love command in John.

To interpret scripture with a disposition for holiness means to release our narcissistic grip on magistracy and to reclaim our vocation to its opposite, which is ministry. While some students I teach could use massive infusions of the Spirit's confidence, others of us do well to repent of shallow mastery and to grow in humility. Humility is not self-degradation, which is a sin. To surrender one's self before scripture is to become like the soil from which we were created (Gen 2:7), *humus* that is fertile and needs mulching. Humble reading is hospitable to another's voice, patient, wholly attentive, still. Again hear Professor Piper, writing in 1946:

²⁴ See William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

²⁵ See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964).

One who has been struck by the saving message of God will approach the Bible as a learner. Gone is the presumption that one already knows everything of the nature and purpose of the Father of Jesus Christ. One will rather read it in a state of constant expectancy and, when the light of truth dawns upon one's heart, be prepared to give up any view of God and human life previously held.²⁶

If Simone Weil could recognize a sacrament in school exercises like geometric proofs,²⁷ can we not acknowledge the miracle of being penetrated by the love of God and neighbor through the exercise of biblical exegesis? To confess that, however, means we shall have to retire common-places like "making the Bible relevant," as though scripture were inert until we do something with it. If we have gotten the matter backwards—if the primary question is What, through scripture, is God making of us?—then our more appropriate response is to kneel mentally before the mystery of divine love that is scripture's sum and substance.²⁸ That mystery is holy; it is Other. We risk consumption by Love that is a tiger, not a teddy bear (Heb 4:11–13).

*"For you have died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God":²⁹
A Disposition for Reappraisal*

Those who have thought deeply on the subject disagree whether the test of our prayer lies in how we live when not praying or whether prayer, stirred and sustained by the Holy Spirit, is as autonomic and all-pervasive as breathing.³⁰ The first view seems to me more Matthean (see Matt 7:21–23), the second more Pauline (Rom 8:26–27), and I find truth in both. However we parse the matter, both claims converge at a common point: prayer and life, authentically practiced, become transparent to each other and interpenetrating. This is surely the case if, at heart, all our prayers are for God's

²⁶ Piper, "How I Study My Bible," 301. Note Rowan Williams: "Prayer . . . is precisely what *resists* the urge of religious language to claim a total perspective: by articulating its own incompleteness before God, it turns away from any claim to human completeness" (*On Christian Theology* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2000], 13).

²⁷ Simone Weil, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God," in idem., *Waiting for God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 105–16.

²⁸ For historical perspective, consult Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961); for theological development, see Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983).

²⁹ Colossians 3:3.

³⁰ The first opinion is characteristic among western theologians such as Luther, for whom prayer is primarily obedience to God's command (introduction to the Lord's Prayer in *The Large Catechism of Martin Luther* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959], 64–5). The second may be more common in Eastern Orthodoxy (thus, *The Pilgrim's Tale*, ed. Aleskei Pentkovsky [New York and Mahwah: Paulist, 1999], 49–67).

glorification and the sanctification of life. On that basis Otto Piper could say, "The praise of God presupposes that God . . . himself has given us a new standard of values, as a result of which all the values which we knew previously no less than our former standard of values, have lost their finality" (5-6). In the crucible of debate, Saint Paul articulated this principle with a diamond's density and clarity: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). If prayer feeds a life by faith in God's Son, how may we regard our interpretation of scripture as crucified with Christ?

We begin by acknowledging that exegesis, like prayer, is a spiritual gift with multiple dimensions. Pelagianism forever crouches at the interpreter's door, tempting her to pride in a bank of historical knowledge, an ear for a text's music, a facility with biblical and cognate languages—or driving her to despair of ever attaining such things. (Pride and despair are mirror images of a single, insidious temptation to self-sufficiency.) Only our embrace of God's grace, crystallized in the gospel of Christ crucified, can keep constantly before us the awareness that truly we have nothing that we have not first received as a gift (1 Cor 4:6-7)—including scripture and prayer themselves. Even more than the gift, we have received the Giver: exegesis with prayer as its motor enacts in time and space the eternal, reciprocating conversation of love within God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Viewed in a Trinitarian light, any understanding of biblical exegesis as "conversation with the text" requires an account of the One who calls that conversation into existence, the One who constitutes its subject matter as love, the One who empowers us with a fitting response. Amidst all the blood spilt over the doctrine of scripture's inspiration, I fear we have not always honored the same Spirit that enlivens scripture's words *from* the page after they were committed to it. Let us do so now: By prayerful exegesis, we glorify the Spirit who is pulling us into God's own primary speech.³¹

Exegesis in the shadow of Golgotha remembers the people of God, from and for whom scripture was evoked, and the ministry of reconciliation for which that people needs equipment (2 Cor 5:19-21). Only through a community of prayer do we learn to pray—all of the first-person plural pronouns of the Lord's Prayer are there for a reason.³² Likewise, only through a

³¹ For this lead I am indebted to Ann and Barry Ulanov, *Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982).

³² See C. Clifton Black, "The Education of Human Wanting," in *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. W. P. Brown (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans [forthcoming]).

community of interpretation do we learn to interpret. The practices of these two communities, however, do not always overlap. In our time, sad to say, much training in biblical scholarship occurs in settings where prayer has been severed from its task and responsibility, where the nurturance of a faithful church is a *non sequitur*. Visits to the religion aisles of Barnes & Noble have become for me chilling summonses before the bar of judgment: much of what I find among the biblical resources are speculative fantasias, whether by Tim LaHaye or the Jesus Seminar. To my shame, there is comparatively little that invites the church's laity or even curious passersby into the mysterious world of biblical faith that questions us, little to remind a reader that exegesis, like prayer, is not cold conjecture but relationship with a God so madly in love with us and the world that only the foolishness of the cross makes sense (1 Cor 1:18-31). Cruciform exegesis resembles petitionary prayer in this respect: if serious, its practitioner is inextricably bound up with its fulfillment (Matt 25:31-46). The man who subjects innocents to unspeakable atrocities, while passing the buck instead of repenting his execrable abuse of power, forfeits the privilege of interpreting the Book of Judges (11:12-40; 19:1-30; 21:1-25). The theologian confident that she could formulate more elegant explanations for suffering than Elihu and all the friends put together had best tarry before rushing to judgments about Job. Only those who know firsthand the potential for sin to rot the core of a devotional life can begin to appreciate the depth of Paul's withering diagnosis in Romans (7:7-25). What Evelyn Underhill once cautioned about prayer applies with equal gravity to exegesis. In the following quotation substitute "scripture" and "interpretation" for (or alongside) "soul" and "prayer," and the point should be clear:

Each time you take a human soul with you into prayer, you accept from God a piece of spiritual work with all its implications and with all its cost—a cost which may mean for you spiritual exhaustion and darkness, and may even include vicarious suffering, the Cross. In offering yourselves on such levels of prayer for the sake of others, you are offering to take your part in the mysterious activities of the spiritual world; to share the saving work of Christ. . . . [R]eal intercession is not merely a petition but a piece of work, involving perfect, costly self-surrender to God for the work he wants done on other souls.³³

³³ *Collected Papers of Evelyn Underhill*, ed. L. Menzies (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946), 57-9.

For the Wesleyan interpreter, here is an area of exegesis in chronic need of "perfection in love." Some among my Presbyterian friends may also recognize an enterprise *semper reformanda*, always in need of reformation.

"My Soul Proclaims the Greatness of the Lord":³⁴ A Disposition for Praise

Eucharist is the carriage of a Christian. Accordingly, exegesis, like prayer, is hard to justify if it does not culminate in gratitude and adoration. An Orthodox theologian has said, "All the food of this world is divine love made edible";³⁵ the same is true for knowledge that feeds mind and soul. Professor Piper was correct: mere admiration of, say, Jeremiah's poetry or Mark's narrative reflects an engagement only of our aesthetic or mental faculties. Prayerful exegesis happens when scripture's radiance seizes one's very self, when "My God!" is the only thing worth saying. Across time, a heart cultivated for thanksgiving lets go of envy and resentment; we learn to be grateful for friends, colleagues and students, who enable us to see in scripture God's beauty where we have been blind. An adoring mind outgrows childish parades of novelty and cleverness among those whom we guide through scripture; and so we heed C. S. Lewis's weary plea, "I wish they'd remember that the charge to Peter was Feed my sheep; not Try experiments on my rats."³⁶ The ultimate aim of exegesis, as of prayer, is to know and to love God and to do God's will. We know that purpose has been satisfied when we delight in scripture, praise its Lord, and realize our lives' meaning in nothing other than our adoption as God's children for God's own sake (Eph 1:5-6).

Gratitude may have come more readily for Otto Piper than for some others. As an officer in the First World War, Piper was shot in the face just beneath his right eye and left for dead on the Western Front. Only after the Red Cross discovered that a soldier already loaded onto their truck had died was Piper found alive and taken away in that casualty's place. His life was saved and his face, restored; sightless in one eye ever after, he read scripture with a magnifying glass. By 1932 he was a pacifist and an outspoken critic of emergent Nazism;³⁷ later he was imprisoned and eventually exiled by Hitler.

³⁴ Luke 1:46.

³⁵ Quoted in Anthony Bloom, *School for Prayer* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 41.

³⁶ C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1963), 5.

³⁷ While reason for such opposition seems self-evident seventy years after the fact, revisionist historians like Christopher Hitchens argue that appeasement of the Third Reich characterized both British and American policy until, respectively, 1939 and 1941 ("The Medals of His Defeats: Examining the Revisionist Version of Winston Churchill," *The Atlantic Monthly* 289 [April, 2002]: 118-37).

After three years at the University of Wales, where colleagues paid his salary by pooling portions of their own, Piper and his family emigrated to Princeton Seminary in 1937. Soon thereafter, his sons Gero and Manfred were drafted for service in the American military. Gero never returned to his new home: he was killed in action against his fellow Germans. Piper's response, for years during and after World War II, was to conscript his students for help in sorting, packing, and shipping clothing for European relief (for which he was decorated in 1960 by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany).³⁸ Piper did not passively endure suffering; he served God in it. Thus, when he declared the Bible a means of grace,³⁹ through which God imparts and stimulates blessing among us, that declaration carries the ring of lived truth.

Regarded *in conspectu Dei*, before the face of God, exegesis is intrinsically connected with prayer.⁴⁰ Such is the case whatever the vagaries of our life together. On occasion we shall find in scripture unalloyed contentment, and rest as a weaned child with its mother (Ps 131:2). At other times we must wrestle the text at Jabbok's ford (Gen 32:23–32), and understand Abba Agathon's comment that there is no labor greater than that of prayer to God: "Prayer is warfare to the last breath."⁴¹ No matter. Prayer is shot through biblical interpretation, just as every offering for God's sake tinctures "bright and clean" all facets of the Christian life and makes even our "drudgery divine":

This is the famous stone

That turneth all to gold:

For that which God doth touch and own

Cannot for less be told.⁴²

In Christ *we* are what God has touched and owns. How could we help but bless and thank God for that?

Soli Deo gloria

³⁸ These details of Piper's life are drawn primarily from Theron, "Otto Alfred Piper 1981–1982," and James I. McCord, "Otto Piper: An Appreciation," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Otto A. Piper*, ed. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder (London: SCM, 1962), xi–v.

³⁹ Piper, "How I Study My Bible," 300.

⁴⁰ "[I]n its totality it is peculiar and characteristic of theology that it can be performed only in the act of prayer" (Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology* [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963], 159–70 [quotation, 160]).

⁴¹ *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, ed. B. Ward (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications / Mowbray, 1975), 22.

⁴² George Herbert, "The Elixir," in *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets*, ed. M. A. Di Cesare (New York: Norton, 1978), 65–6.

What Has Basel to Do with Berlin?

Continuities in the Theologies of Barth and Schleiermacher¹

by BRUCE L. MCCORMACK

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I. INTRODUCTION

KARL BARTH AND Friedrich Schleiermacher: surely an odd couple if ever there was one! What has Basel to do with Berlin? Quite a bit actually, though in some respects I have been fairly slow in realizing it. Of course, it has long been common knowledge that Schleiermacher constituted for Barth, on a deeply personal level, a kind of alter-ego; a person with whom he could never be “finished,”² a person whose wealth of problems and highly nuanced solutions constantly called into question the adequacy of Barth’s criticisms of him. That much, I have long understood. And I have also believed for some time that a close investigation of Schleiermacher and Barth on the level of material questions in dogmatics would turn up evidence that the former had exercised varying degrees of influence on the latter, ranging from the substantial to the less consequential. But for a long time, I drew the line when it came to theological method.

On the level of method, I tended for many years to follow the opinion of the vast majority—which meant that I expected no possibility of rapprochement. Indeed, in a review of the well-known volume *Barth and Schleiermacher: Beyond the Impasse?* which I published eleven years ago, I referred to Schleiermacher as the “methodological antithesis” of Barth.³ Looking back, I would

¹ The influence of the monumental work of Brian A. Gerrish on my own reading of Schleiermacher in this lecture will be everywhere apparent. It will also be obvious that I have pushed his interpretation in directions that he would not himself wish to go. Still, I dedicate this lecture to him, in gratitude for all that he has given to me in inspiration, encouragement, and friendship.

² In his “Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher”, Barth says of his relationship to his great predecessor, “. . . although certainly ‘against’ Schleiermacher in my own way, I for my part was neither so certain nor so completely finished with him as Brunner was after he completed that book [*Die Mystik und das Wort*, 1924].” See Barth, “Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher,” in Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen, Winter Semester of 1923/24* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 266.

³ See Bruce L. McCormack, review of James O. Duke and Robert Streetman, eds., *Barth and Schleiermacher: Beyond the Impasse?* in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44 (1991): 260. I stand by everything else I wrote in that review.

have to say that my judgment at that time was understandable (in terms of the consensus shared by specialists in the study of both Schleiermacher and Barth). But I had yet to process the full implications of a truth that was only then dawning on me: viz. that Barth's criticisms of Schleiermacher presupposed an understanding of him which was more accurate where the Schleiermacherianism of Barth's time was concerned than it was for the great Berliner himself. Barth was in this, as in other matters, a child of his times at least as often as he was able to transcend his times. He was the heir of a picture of Schleiermacher that he learned at the feet of his teachers, Horst Stephan and Wilhelm Herrmann—a picture which was not without its shortcomings. And when Barth turned against Schleiermacher, it is hard to avoid the impression that he was turning most decisively against that form of Schleiermacherianism whose great advocates at that time were Ernst Troeltsch and Georg Wobbermin.

So where should we begin in our efforts to acquire a more accurate understanding? The question is not simply one that I have chosen to pose for myself on this occasion. It is one that I have been wrestling with for the last six years or so as I have been preparing a book on Barth's relationship to Schleiermacher. And the answer I have given to myself has two foci, so to speak. The first has entailed a close reading of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* in tandem with an equally close study of the history of Schleiermacherianism. The goal of this study has been to ask: what did the Schleiermacherians take from Schleiermacher? And what did they miss or choose to leave behind?

The second focus has been tied to the question "which Barth do I bring into conversation with Schleiermacher?" Do I focus on the later Barth who seems in the eyes of many to have mellowed in his attitude towards Schleiermacher? That would certainly be one possibility. In the last year of his life, in frustration over his university's decision not to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of Schleiermacher's birth, he offered a seminar on the *Speeches*. Out of this seminar came Barth's famous "Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher" in which he offered up the provocative suggestion that it might be possible to write a "a theology of the third article"—a theology, in other words, in which "(e)verything which needs to be said, considered and believed about God the Father and God the Son in an understanding of the first and second articles might be shown and illuminated in its foundations through God the Holy Spirit . . ." ⁴—and that such a theology might well provide the means of creating a bridge between himself and Schleiermacher. The suggestion remained only tentative and undevel-

⁴ Barth, "Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher," 278.

oped. We claim too much for ourselves if we think we can know exactly what Barth meant. The only real clue that he offered in this context of what such a theology might look like is that in it, the "entire work of God for his creatures, for, in and with human beings, might be made visible in terms of its own teleology in which all contingency is excluded." In other words, the whole would be controlled by eschatology. But reflecting on this possibility has led me to ask: what would a theology written on a foundation laid in the third article and controlled by eschatology look like *if carried out on the soil of Karl Barth's theological commitments*? One possible answer is that it might look very much like Barth's earliest effort at the writing of a dogmatics. In contrast to the Christological centering and grounding of doctrines in the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth's earlier *Göttingen Dogmatics* attempts an elaboration of doctrines with constant attention being given to the dialectic of veiling and unveiling in revelation. Not only is such a centering and grounding more trinitarian than the later christocentrism, in that all three moments of revelation come into their own, it is also more nearly "pneumatocentric" in that the situation of the human recipient of revelation stands very close to the heart of Barth's interests. But even more importantly, the dialectic of givenness and nongivenness in revelation also succeeds in keeping the eschatological reservation that encompasses all dogmatic labor more clearly in view than does the later christocentrism and gives to the whole a sense of unrest and urgency that contrasts with the calm that surrounds the later unfolding of doctrines from a Christological center.

These observations lead quite naturally to a second alternative. One could make the *Göttingen Dogmatics* the centerpiece of a genetic and comparative study, rather than the later *Church Dogmatics*. The *Church Dogmatics* would be brought in only where it became necessary to reflect upon further changes in either the method or the content of Barth's dogmatics.

What I would like to offer you here is a first look at the book I am writing—a book that will be based on the second of the two alternatives I have just described.

II. THE FATE OF 'CHURCH DOGMATICS' IN THE SCHLEIERMACHER RENAISSANCE

The first decade of the twentieth century marked the hey-day of the so-called "Schleiermacher renaissance." It also saw the break-up of Schleiermacherianism into two main camps, associated preeminently with Ernst Troeltsch on the one side and Wilhelm Herrmann on the other. A close analysis of the issues involved in the split between these two theologians is very instructive for the purposes of my research, for it helps to explain how

the picture of Schleiermacher that Barth would eventually rebel against took shape during the years in which he was a student of theology at the Universities of Bern, Berlin, Tübingen, and Marburg. Obviously, I cannot enter into the issues as thoroughly here as would be desired in a book-length treatment. What I can do is to sketch briefly Troeltsch's critical, highly qualified reception of Schleiermacher. To do so will help to make clear just how far the Schleiermacherianism of Barth's day was from the theology of Schleiermacher himself. It will also help to explain why Barth would, from 1915 on to the end of his life, be so critical of Schleiermacher's theology. Notwithstanding the "inner voice" that would, throughout Barth's life, speak to Schleiermacher's advantage,⁵ the fact that his critique remained largely unchanged to the very end stands quite possibly as testimony to a worry that Troeltsch might have had Schleiermacher right and that Troeltsch was, therefore, the most genuine heir of Schleiermacher in a changed theological situation. I turn then to Ernst Troeltsch, a sharp-eyed critic of ecclesial dogmatics if ever there was one.

A. Troeltsch's Reception of Schleiermacher

In a 1908 essay entitled "A Look Back on Half a Century of Theological Science," Troeltsch made it clear precisely what he had taken from Schleiermacher and wherein he had to depart from him. The essay offers an analysis of the then-current theological situation whose central problematic, as Troeltsch saw it, lay in the loose, highly conflictual "juxtaposition of a purely scientific historical theology and a practical mediating dogmatics,"⁶ both of which had a strong root in Schleiermacher's theology. Troeltsch himself was an ardent defender of the first and highly critical of the second, though he was quick to grant that any truly "scientific theology" would also need to provide "support for a living religious preaching." His criticisms of the second possibility, however, mark the limits of his appreciation of Schleiermacher.

The "program of mediation," as Troeltsch saw it, owed its existence to an "agnostic" theory of the nature of religious knowledge.⁷ "This dogmatic

⁵ Ibid., 267: "... for all my opposition to Schleiermacher, I could never think of him without feeling what Doctor Bartolo so well articulated in *The Marriage of Figaro*: 'An inner voice always spoke to his advantage' . . ."

⁶ Ernst Troeltsch, "Rückblick auf ein halbes Jahrhundert der theologischen Wissenschaft", rev. ed. in *Gesammelte Schriften* 2 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1913), 221; E.T. idem., "Half a Century of Theology: A Review," in Robert Morgan and Michael Pye, eds., *Ernst Troeltsch: Writings on Theology and Religion* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), 76.

⁷ Ibid., 200; E.T., 58.

agnosticism signifies the impossibility of exact and adequate conclusions in the area of religion. The basis for its knowledge is said to reside in its practical, confessional and feeling character, and all statements containing or communicating this sort of knowledge are said to be inadequate and symbolic."⁸ Of course, for Troeltsch's money, such a "special knowledge" was not really knowledge at all—which is why he calls this an "agnostic theory."

The historical origin of this theory lay quite clearly in Schleiermacher's attempt to locate religion on that level of human consciousness that he denominated "feeling" (in distinction from "knowing" and "doing"). According to Troeltsch, the effect of this move was to reduce dogmatics and ethics to "practical disciplines," without "theoretical" (or, as we might say today, "cognitive") standing. The great virtue of this move, as Troeltsch saw it, lay in the fact that it so completely separated religion from science that the latter was allowed to go its own way, unimpeded by the needs of religion. But it also had the effect, for the time being, of preserving the illusion that was Christian belief in the absoluteness of Christianity. So long as historical science had been unable to challenge Christian belief that the "religious consciousness was perfected in Christianity" and that, therefore, the redemption accomplished in and through Jesus of Nazareth was final and unsurpassable, the older program of mediation worked well enough. But historical science had come a long way since Schleiermacher's time. The biggest advance lay in the recognition that Christianity is a historical phenomenon that can only be studied in a truly "scientific" fashion by means of a history of religions approach that located the origins of Christianity in the historical flux of contemporaneous religious developments (in Judaism, the mystery religions, Hellenistic religions, etc.). A truly "scientific" approach to history would now, Troeltsch claimed, have to be free of Christian presuppositions.⁹ But that also put the program of mediation on the defensive. The absoluteness of Christianity could now only be maintained by means of a metaphysically-founded apologetic or, as was true in the case of Wilhelm Herrmann, by means of a "subjective mysticism" that regards everything historical as a mere signpost and stimulus for individual religious experience.¹⁰ Either way involved a flight from history. The agnostic theory of religious knowledge had thus brought the older program of mediation into dissolution.

If there was now to be a successful mediation between historical science and dogmatics, it could only happen, Troeltsch thought, where dogmatics as

⁸ Ibid., E.T. 59.

⁹ Ibid., 211; E.T. 68.

¹⁰ Ibid., 219; E.T. 75.

a practical, confessional, ecclesial affair was replaced by a dogmatics that was able to build on a foundation laid in real knowledge. He was quite happy to grant that, on the side of the agnostic theory of religious knowledge, Herrmann was the genuine representative of Schleiermacher. But there was another side to Schleiermacher's thought that Troeltsch believed offered a way out of the current impasse.

History and dogmatics must continue to strive against each other unless they are both given a common root and a common presupposition.¹¹ If the decision with regard to such a common root and common presupposition is not to be arbitrary, then it will have to be the result of a "comparative valuation" that flows from an intuition of the whole of historical life. What Troeltsch is clearly suggesting is that the methods of the history of religions school offer the key to the entire enterprise. It is their presuppositions that must make possible a reconciliation between history and dogmatics. The history of religions approach to the study of Christian origins and development presupposed that the development of the religious consciousness has taken place in accordance with "general laws and tendencies."¹² The elaboration of these "general laws and tendencies" is the task of what Troeltsch called a "general science of religion" (or, "philosophy of religion"). A dogmatics that did not continue to strive against the historical disciplines would then also have to be built on the same foundation of the "general science of religion."

Now all of this is spelled out in a terse, programmatic way and it is not clear (in this essay at least) how Troeltsch would have sought to accomplish this obviously ambitious program in the details. For my purposes here, it is enough to point out that it was precisely in his pursuit of a "general science of religion" that Troeltsch sought for authorization in Schleiermacher. But the success of this appeal depended entirely on the truth of the claim that Schleiermacher sought to understand the evolution of religious consciousness in terms of *general* laws and tendencies. Clearly, Troeltsch believed that he could have "Schleiermacher's program" without Schleiermacher's alleged "agnostic theory of religious knowledge." He was quick to acknowledge that in the process "scarcely one stone of Schleiermacher's own teaching can remain upon another . . ." ¹³ But he remained confident that he could carry off this program "in Schleiermacher's sense" even if no one before him (including, apparently, Schleiermacher himself) had managed to do so.

¹¹ Ibid., 222; E.T. 77.

¹² Ibid., 210; E.T. 69.

¹³ Ibid., 225-6; E.T. 80.

But how accurate is this portrayal of Schleiermacher's theology? The "general laws and tendencies" of an evolving religious consciousness of which Troeltsch speaks must somehow be empirically available for study if they are to provide a demonstrable basis for a "general theory of religion." But the attempt to enlist Schleiermacher in support of such a project could only succeed where Schleiermacher was "psychologized"—where, that is, the subject-matter with which Schleiermacher was concerned is reduced to a psychological "given," a datum of the empirical self-consciousness. And as we shall see in a moment, that is precisely the move that Troeltsch would later make in his own *Glaubenslehre*. But was Schleiermacher's theology of consciousness guilty of psychologism in this sense? Just how accurate is this portrayal of Schleiermacher's theology? Was Schleiermacher a foundationalist of a subjective kind, as Troeltsch's reading of his "program" would seem to imply? That is the question to which we must now turn.

B. *A More Authentic Schleiermacher*

Published three years before his death, the second edition of Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* is his most mature work. By any standard of assessment, it is a brilliant achievement; unapologetically Christian, explicitly opposed to natural religion, structured throughout by what can rightly be styled the "infinite qualitative difference between God and humanity," it is throughout an exercise in *ecclesial* dogmatics. But that fact has rarely been appreciated. The reason is not simply that the "Introduction" to the *Glaubenslehre* has been read as an *independent* exercise in the philosophy of religion, designed to provide a foundation for the dogmatics that follows in Parts I and II. The *Glaubenslehre* most certainly has been read in this way by friends and foes alike. But this is only symptomatic; it is not the root cause of the failure of much Schleiermacher interpretation. The root cause has to do with a failure to grasp the importance of the unique melding of romantic and idealistic elements in Schleiermacher's thought that contributed to the construction of a *critical* theology of consciousness.

The truth of the matter is that not all theologies of consciousness are cut from the same piece of cloth. It is the critical nature of the method employed in the construction of Schleiermacher's theology of consciousness that sets him apart from all later imitators and that necessitated that the dogmatics that emerged would have the character of "church dogmatics." How this could be missed is an interesting story in its own right; a story that begins with the preoccupation of Schleiermacher's immediate followers with apologetic issues, with the result that they quickly abandoned his romantic

category of "feeling" in favor of a foundation laid in Hegel's concept of universal reason. The end point of the story has to do with the psychologism and historicism of Troeltsch and many of his contemporaries (such as Wobbermin). With the weight of scholarly opinion during Barth's student years decidedly in favor of reading Schleiermacher's theology of consciousness in a psychologized fashion, Barth may be forgiven for the interpretive mistakes reflected in his criticisms of Schleiermacher.

What, then, do I mean by a "critical" theology of consciousness? The best place to begin is with an overview of the purpose and method employed in Schleiermacher's Introduction. The purpose of the Introduction is to identify the "essence of Christianity" so as to have a basis upon which to define the nature of Christian dogmatics and the method(s) appropriate to it. Schleiermacher's strategy for identifying the "essence of Christianity" is to begin with an analysis of human self-consciousness. He begins with a distinction of fundamental and wide-ranging significance—that between "sensible self-consciousness" and "immediate self-consciousness."

"Sensible self-consciousness" refers to what is often called empirical or "objective self-consciousness"—that consciousness of self that takes its rise through making the self an "object" to oneself or, at the very least, through that more subconscious awareness of self that accompanies all interaction with the people and things of our experience. The meaning of that category is clear and merits no further comment. "Immediate self-consciousness," however, is a notoriously difficult concept in Schleiermacher's theology; it is easier to say what it is not than to say what it is.¹⁴ What it is not is "objective consciousness"—which means that it entails no production of a "representation of oneself" which is mediated by "self-contemplation."¹⁵ To speak of an "immediate" self-consciousness, then, would be—quite literally—to speak of a form of self-consciousness that is not mediated by representations. But to speak in this way only serves to underscore the elusiveness of the concept. How is it possible to be conscious of self without making oneself, to some degree at least, an "object" to oneself? And does that process not require the production of representations? The two initial examples Schleiermacher

¹⁴ Brian Gerrish rightly notes, "'Feeling', in the sense of 'immediate self-consciousness', is by definition elusive; a living movement that stops when you stop to look at it. But as long as you leave it alone, it remains indeterminate and you cannot say what it is." See Gerrish, "Nature and the Theatre of Redemption: Schleiermacher on Christian Dogmatics and the Creation Story," in *idem.*, *Continuing the Reformation: Essays on Modern Religious Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 211–2.

¹⁵ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 2nd edition, trans. H.R. Mackintosh (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), ¶3.2. [Hereafter abbreviated "CF" with paragraph and section number following to facilitate comparison with German original.]

gives of states belonging to the immediate form of self-consciousness, viz. joy and sorrow, may indeed be present without reflection upon them. But to admit this much is to tilt "immediate self-consciousness" back in the direction of an unconscious or subconscious state of existence.

Schleiermacher further equates "immediate self-consciousness" with "feeling"—which does not serve to resolve the conceptual difficulties. "Feeling" is defined by Schleiermacher through contrast with knowing and doing. Human life, he says, "is to be conceived as an alteration between an abiding-in-self (*Insichbleiben*) and a passing-beyond-self (*Aussichheraustreten*) on the part of the subject." "Doing" is a pure passing-beyond-self, an action on the part of the subject directed towards an object. "Knowing" entails a mixture of the two. Where "knowing" is taken to mean the act of knowledge in the moment of its actualization (*Erkennen*), it is a passing-beyond-self. Where, on the other hand, it is taken to refer to acquired knowledge, a having known (*Erkannthaben*), there "knowing" is an abiding-in-self. "Feeling," however, is a pure abiding-in-self. In that it entails no action of any kind on the part of the subject, it is not something that is effected by the subject within him/herself; it is rather something that takes place in the subject, the source of which is to be found outwith human consciousness.¹⁶ "Feeling" is, thus, pure receptivity.

Now this is not the place to discuss in detail Schleiermacher's philosophical demonstration of the existence of this moment of pure receptivity and his analysis of its most basic content in terms of the so-called "feeling of absolute dependence." Much more important for my purposes is the *status* of this "demonstration." Is it intended as an apologetic directed to a non-Christian audience? Is the "demonstration" thought by Schleiermacher to be of such a nature that it would compel agreement on the part of any "reasonable" reader, regardless of what his or her faith commitments might be? And if the answer to that is "yes," does this whole train of reflection constitute a "foundation" for the dogmatics to follow? If that were the case, Schleiermacher is much to be pitied, for his effort would in that case have to judged a dismal failure. Hegel's derisive attitude towards the "feeling of absolute dependence" is symptomatic of the attitude of a good many nineteenth-century philosophers towards Schleiermacher's analysis. But there are good reasons for believing that Schleiermacher had no intention of engaging in this kind of apologetic—not in this work, at any rate.

First, although the feeling of absolute dependence is *in* all, it is not *recognized* by all. It can undergo defective or arrested development as a

¹⁶ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶3.3.

consequence of various forms of "godlessness."¹⁷ So, on the face of it, the account given of religion in the Introduction could not be expected to make sense to all. But, second, and even more importantly, the "feeling of absolute dependence" does not exist anywhere in reality in a pure form—apart from the consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth, of course. In every other individual, it only exists in modified form; i.e., in combination with modifications that have been introduced into it through stimuli that have come to the individual from without, entering by way of the "sensible self-consciousness." Indeed, the "peculiar essence of Christianity" consists in the modification of the feeling of absolute dependence by the redemption accomplished in and through Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁸ But if the "essence" of a given religion consists in the *modifications* which take place in the feeling of absolute dependence and not in that feeling *per se*, then the various religions cannot be regarded as just so many species of a common genus. Each has an irreducible uniqueness that is not set aside by formal similarities on the level of doctrines or ethical teachings.¹⁹ Third, Schleiermacher is adamant that Christian dogmatics must stand on its own "two feet," so to speak, and not make itself the servant of any philosophy—and this, for very sound hermeneutical reasons. "Our dogmatic theology will not, however, stand on its own proper ground and soil with the same assurance with which philosophy has long stood on its own, until the separation of the two types of proposition is so complete that, e.g., so extraordinary a question as whether the same proposition can be true in philosophy and false in Christian theology, and *vice versa*, will no longer be asked, for the simple reason that a proposition cannot appear in the one context precisely as it appears in the other; however similar it sounds, a difference must always be assumed."²⁰ And so, he concludes that dogmatics

¹⁷ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶33.1–2.

¹⁸ As Brian Gerrish puts it, "The Christian way of being religious is, in fact, nothing other than faith in Jesus the Redeemer; and it is surely a mistake when [Emil] Brunner interprets Schleiermacher to mean that the feeling of absolute dependence is the essence of Christian faith, the reference to Jesus merely giving its accidental occasion." If it were true that the feeling of absolute dependence is the "essence" of the Christian religion, then the Christian religion could only be a sub-class of a "universal concept of religion", an "accidental individuation" of that universal and, as such, one possible manifestation of the universal among many others. But that is not Schleiermacher's view. See Gerrish, *Tradition and the Modern World: Reformed Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 36, 24.

¹⁹ In the first of his open letters to his friend, Friedrich Lücke, Schleiermacher observes, "I must . . . protest against the view expressed by our friend Nitzsch. . . . He criticizes me for seeking to incorporate what is distinctively Christian into a universal religious knowledge. In my opinion, however, such a knowledge would be nothing other than an abstraction from what is Christian." See Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre: Two Letters to Dr. Lücke* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981), 52.

²⁰ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶16, postscript.

must, at all costs be kept free from speculation. Fourth and finally, Schleiermacher is quite explicit in defining his audience in this work.

... it is obvious that an adherent of some other faith might perhaps be completely convinced by the above account that what we have set forth is really the peculiar essence of Christianity, without being thereby so convinced that Christianity is actually the truth, as to be compelled to accept it. Everything we say in this place is relative to Dogmatics, and Dogmatics is only for Christians; and so this account is only for those who live within the pale of Christianity, and is intended only to give guidance, in the interests of Dogmatics, for determining whether the expressions of any religious consciousness are Christian or not, and whether the Christian quality is strongly expressed in them, or rather doubtfully. We entirely renounce all attempt to prove the truth or necessity of Christianity; and we presuppose, on the contrary, that every Christian, before he enters at all upon inquiries of this kind, has already the inward certainty that his religion cannot take any higher form than this.²¹

It is quite true that Schleiermacher is only speaking in the immediate context in which this passage appears of the "peculiar essence of Christianity." But since the establishment of that peculiar essence is the goal of the entire first chapter, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that what is said here applies to the whole. And certainly, the statement "we entirely renounce all attempt to prove the truth or necessity of Christianity" is a very bold statement whose significance would be hard to limit, if taken at face value.

The conclusion that all of this evidence invites is that Schleiermacher's philosophical derivation of the "feeling of absolute dependence" through an analysis of all human self-consciousness generally is intended for Christians, as a way of supplementing what they know to be true based on their experience of redemption, viz. that they are radically dependent upon God for their redemption and if radically dependent upon God for redemption then radically dependent, too, for their very existence.²²

²¹ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶11,5.

²² It is quite true that Schleiermacher says of the first half of his derivation (that portion of the argument which has not yet touched on the feeling of absolute dependence), "To these propositions assent can be unconditionally demanded; and no one will deny them who is capable of a little introspection and can find interest in the subject matter of our present inquiries." See Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶4.1. Even here, however, the note of "who is capable of a little introspection and can find interest in the real subject of our inquiries" strongly suggests a reservation. It is quite possible that not everyone will even be capable of this much.

But however Schleiermacher may have intended his Introduction to be understood, the decisive point for my purposes is this. The elusiveness of the immediate self-consciousness has its ground ultimately in the fact that it is not a psychological *datum* in the same way that the contents of the sensible self-consciousness are. It is not directly available as such; hence, it cannot be separated out from the contents of the sensible self-consciousness in such a way as to allow it to be controlled, mastered, and brought into play at the whim of any individual in whom it is found. If it is to be realized at all, its content (viz. the feeling of absolute dependence) must have the mastery over the stimuli which come to the individual from without on the level of sensible self-consciousness.²³ Thus, the feeling of absolute dependence, that original relation of God to the human subject—or “original revelation” as Schleiermacher puts it at one point—is not something that the human subject could ever master in herself. What Schleiermacher has done is to place the God-to-human relation (and the redemptive power that can be released in and through it) at a *critical* distance from all self-reflective human activity, such that control of that relation always remains, at every moment, the prerogative of the divine. Ultimately, the critical difference between divine action and human action that first announces itself in Schleiermacher’s distinction between immediate and sensible self-consciousness performs the same function in his theology that Barth’s distinction between the Word of God and human words performs in his; viz. to overcome the urge within the human subject to seize control of the God-human relation. Absolute dependence is indeed *absolute*; one can, under the impact of divine causality, surrender oneself to its power but one cannot cause it to be effective.

Such a conclusion finds further support in Schleiermacher’s treatment of the God-world relation. A good argument can be made that the central problematic that recurs throughout the *Glaubenslehre*, running through the whole like a red thread, is the problem of the relation of divine causality to the physical causality found in the created universe. This becomes immediately clear at the very outset of the *Glaubenslehre* in the radical distinction that Schleiermacher establishes between God and the world—a distinction that is advanced on the basis of the following train of reflection. Vis-à-vis the things and people we encounter in this world, we are relatively free and relatively dependent. That is to say, we exercise on all these people and things, no matter how remote they may be from us in space, an influence and they, in turn, exercise a counter-influence upon us. The relationship between all created entities is, thus, reciprocal. With respect to God alone are we

²³ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶5.3.

absolutely dependent. But if the dependence of the people and things of this world upon God is truly *absolute*, then God must also be completely free with respect to the world. For Schleiermacher, to bring God into the realm of reciprocal relations would inevitably cancel out or negate the feeling of absolute dependence—which is impossible. “Any possibility of God being in any way *given* is entirely excluded, because anything that is outwardly given must be given as an object exposed to our counter-influence, however slight this may be. The transference of the idea of God to any perceptible object . . . is always a corruption, whether it be a temporary transference, i.e., a theophany, or a constitutive transference, in which God is represented as permanently a particular perceptible existence.”²⁴ Thus, God could not make himself “objective” in this world without entering into the relation of reciprocity that is the inevitable condition of all creaturely relations. Of course, it goes without saying that Schleiermacher’s commitment to the absolute freedom of God makes an incarnation as understood in traditional terms a frank impossibility.

But how, then, does the divine causality become effective in this world? God must remain outwith the world if He is not to made subject to the reciprocal relations within that world. In any interaction with the world, God must preserve His “otherness” if He is to be God. He must act from the outside, so to speak, not from within. So how are we to understand divine causality? Schleiermacher holds that “The Absolute Causality to which the feeling of absolute dependence points back can only be described in such a way that, on the one hand, it is differentiated from and thus placed over against everything contained in the system of nature and, on the other hand, it is equated with the circumference of the latter.”²⁵ That is, divine causality is equal in compass or breadth to the totality of finite causes at work in the system of nature but it is to be strictly differentiated from the latter. “The Divine Causality as equal in compass to the totality of the natural is presented in the expression of the divine *omnipotence*. The Divine Causality placed over against the finite and the natural is presented in the expression the divine *eternity*.”²⁶

But this only serves to underscore the difficulties. If the divine causality is eternal, how does it become effective in time? The closest Schleiermacher can come to an explanation is to speak of the “supernatural becoming natural”²⁷—and, of course, doing so in such a way as not to set aside the

²⁴ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶4.4.

²⁵ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶51, introductory proposition.

²⁶ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶51.1.

²⁷ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶88.4; 100.3; 117.2; 120.1–2.

difference between the two. But, of course, that is not an explanation; it is at most a witness, a pointing to a reality that is extremely difficult to conceptualize. At the time of writing the second edition of his *Romans*, Karl Barth addressed a similar problem by means of a geometrical image. There he wrote, "In the resurrection, the new world of the Holy Spirit touches the old world of the flesh. But it touches as a tangent touches the circle, without touching it and precisely in that it does *not* touch it, touches it as its boundary, as new world."²⁸ For Barth this problem was very much a problem of the relation of eternity and time. Can eternity enter time without ceasing to be eternity? Barth's answer in the second *Romans* was no; eternity cannot enter time. But eternity can *encounter* time; it can influence time from beyond, so to speak.²⁹ Schleiermacher needs something like this in order to be able to speak at all of how the "supernatural becomes natural."³⁰

My point here is not to defend any of this, though it must be said that if anyone wished to take issue with any of it, they would have to recognize that there is far more to Schleiermacher's understanding of the God-world relation than I have been able to present here. My point is this. The feeling of absolute dependence is the result of a divine act of relating to the human in time; a divine act that is eternal and, therefore, at most *encounters* the human in the depth dimensions of his or her being but in no way becomes fixed and stabilized. It is a *dandum* and not a *datum*; something that is given at every moment by means of a unitary, supra-temporal divine action and not something that is simply in us as a capacity is in us. And certainly it is not something that is at the disposal of the human, to bring into play for purposes we might deign to assign to it. Thus, when I speak of Schleiermacher's theology of consciousness as being *critical* in nature, what I have in mind is the fact that it sets definite limits to the capacities of the human where the knowing and experiencing of God is concerned. Schleiermacher's theology is

²⁸ Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, 6.

²⁹ On this point, see my *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology; Its Genesis and Development, 1909–1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 263–4.

³⁰ Schleiermacher, *CF*, 4.3: "Hence a feeling of absolute dependence, strictly speaking, *cannot exist in a single moment as such*, because such a moment is always determined, as regards its total content, by what is *given* to us, and thus by objects towards which we have a feeling of freedom" (initial emphasis is mine). Like Barth's understanding of revelation in the second *Romans*, which occurs in a moment without before and after and, therefore, without any perduring existence on the plan of history, so also Schleiermacher's conception of the divine act that gives rise to the feeling of absolute dependence is that of a relation the character of whose Whence guarantees that it cannot exist in a single moment as such. How then do we gain access to it? Only by means of a kind of transcendental deduction that asks for the conditions for the possibility of the Christian experience of redemption.

a theology of limits; one, that is, that limits the human in order to lead a person to the point where God might establish a redemptive relation with him or her.

The final question that needs to be addressed is this: what is the theological method commensurate with a critical theology of consciousness as I have described it? What is the theological method that is best able to honor the elusive, uncontrollable character of immediate self-consciousness and of that feeling of absolute dependence that is its primary content? Far too many interpreters of Schleiermacher speak quite simply of his dogmatics as though it were the result of a fairly straightforward attempt to "read" doctrines off of the Christian's religious self-consciousness in the present moment. But that is a fairly drastic oversimplification.

"Dogmatic theology," Schleiermacher says, "is the science which systematizes the doctrine prevalent in a Christian Church at a given time."³¹ The central aim of this definition is the overcoming of the purely individual. The subject-matter with which dogmatic theology works is not "individual opinions and views"—even if the opinions and views in question be those of the theologians carrying out the exercise. Dogmatic theology is not "private confession" or an individual performance-piece. The subject-matter with which dogmatic theology works consists in the shared expressions by means of which religion is communicated *in a church*. The "prevalent doctrine" is, thus, that which "can be put forward as a presentation of common piety without provoking dissension or schism." That such material includes the doctrinal formulations found in the confessional symbols of a given church is affirmed by Schleiermacher, though he adds that the "prevalent doctrine" may not be limited to the confessions alone.³² To put it this way is to suggest that the raw material with which the dogmatician works is highly complex, composed of present elements but also of past elements. It would be a mistake, then, to suppose that Schleiermacher's definition of dogmatic theology represents a kind of tyranny of the present moment.

Not surprisingly, then, the dogmatic method that Schleiermacher advocates is not a method for "thematizing," if you will, the contents of the Christian's religious self-consciousness as such. In truth, there is no *method* for doing that. But given that the Christian's religious self-consciousness has already developed in a particular community, that it has already turned up a number of dogmatic propositions, the need arises to bring order into the fragmentary and often chaotic mass of such propositions. To achieve this

³¹ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶19, introductory proposition.

³² Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶19.3.

end, Schleiermacher advocates what he calls a "double method"—a method that is at once systematic and historical, a method that involves *adopting* dogmatic statements and *connecting* them so as to bring out their internal relations. Such a "double method" must also attend, however to both the contents of the Christian's religious self-consciousness as it is attaining communal expression in the present moment as well as the contents of the Christian's religious self-consciousness as it attained communal expression in the past. If the statements adopted are to be Christian, they must stand in a demonstrable relation to Scripture; if they are to be Protestant, they must stand in a demonstrable relation to the confessions. *Glaubenslehre*, you see, has a history; it is the history of efforts on the part of the church and its theologians to make a critical selection from amongst the chaotic mass of dogmatic propositions and to find a suitable arrangement of them that would be disclosive of their organic and logical connections.³³ Schleiermacher's method is, in truth, dialectical in nature. He moves back and forth, between past and present—which is why his treatment of a locus of doctrine will typically begin with an appeal to relevant data from the New Testament and the Evangelical confessions.

Now if the need to adopt and connect existing dogmatic propositions (past and present) is to be well-served, there is a need for rules of engagement, so to speak. And it is precisely here that the feeling of absolute dependence comes into play. But it is of the utmost importance to remember that the feeling of absolute dependence *as feeling* lies beyond the conceptual grasp of the dogmatician. All the dogmatician has at her disposal is a representation of that feeling, constructed by the objective consciousness. And that means that, insofar as the feeling of absolute dependence is brought into play in dogmatic theology, what is really being brought into play is the verbal formulation, the construct rendered in didactic form, and not the thing itself. That Schleiermacher is less than explicit about this is not an insuperable argument against the validity of the claim I am making here. For his actual procedure in the elaboration of his various doctrines shows that what is doing is using the verbal formula to address two needs above all: (1) the need for a critical norm for setting limits to the subject-matters and questions which may be validly treated with the dogmatic sphere of reflection (so as to avoid speculation) and (2) the need for a flexibly employed heuristic principle for appropriating biblical testimony on the one hand and Christian dogmas and confessional

³³ Schleiermacher, *CF*, ¶27, introductory proposition: "All propositions which claim a place in an epitome of Evangelical doctrine must prove themselves; partly through an appeal to the Evangelical confessions . . . and partly through an explanation of their unity with other already acknowledged propositions."

statements of faith on the other. *As feeling*, the "feeling of absolute dependence" is an *a priori* element proper to human nature as such. *As a verbal formula* employed within the bounds of dogmatic theology, however, it is an *a posteriori* construct. That this is so follows directly from the nongiveness of the feeling that we established earlier.

Theology done under these conditions is an always incomplete, fragmentary enterprise. It does not lead to a "system" in the sense suggested by the overused phrase "deductive science." It is certainly systematic, in that the propositions employed are organically related and admit of considerable logical coherence. But done well, a critical theology of consciousness in Schleiermacher's style will always be a theology that places due emphasis on the limits of human knowing.

C. Troeltsch's Modified Schleiermacherianism

Ernst Troeltsch lectured for two semesters on the subject of *Glaubenslehre* in the summer semester of 1912 and the winter semester of 1912-1913 at the University of Heidelberg.³⁴ Much had changed since the time of Schleiermacher, above all in the realm of the natural and historical sciences, and these changes were reflected in what Troeltsch took from Schleiermacher and what he felt obligated to leave behind. In the realm of the natural sciences, the advance of scientific materialism (fueled by evolutionary theory) threatened the dignity of the human. In the face of this development, from Ritschl on through Troeltsch, German theology sought to defend the thesis that spirit and matter are incommensurable realities. The realm of the spirit was seen to be the realm of freedom. In view of the high value placed on freedom and its importance for a truly *personal* existence, Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence" seemed all too pantheistic in a materialistic sense, all too deterministic, and his God indistinguishable from "fate." In the historical sciences, the greatest innovation had been fueled by Troeltsch himself as the theologian of the history of religions school. On Troeltsch's view, any attempt to define the "essence of Christianity" from this point on would no longer be able to privilege the originating form of Christianity but would have to attend to the totality of church life in all of its historical manifestations. It would also have to be guided by a recognition that "The essence of Christianity can only be arrived at in so far as Christianity is

³⁴ These lectures were published posthumously by Marta Troeltsch. See Ernst Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre* (München: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot), 1925; E.T. *The Christian Faith*, trans. Garrett E. Paul (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) [hereafter cited as *Glaubenslehre*].

thought of as a part of an overall religious and cultural development. For every peculiarity of a special area, every special essence, is after all only a particular form of the general development of the spiritual life."³⁵ In practice, this meant that the "essence of Christianity" would no longer be abstracted from the Christian's experience of redemption as per Schleiermacher; it would be identified by means of investigation into the historical development of Christianity in its totality in comparison with the development of other religions.

Gone in Troeltsch's *Glaubenslehre* was the entire apparatus of the religious self-consciousness delineated by Schleiermacher. To the extent that Troeltsch retained a place for "feeling," it had now become a constitutive element of what Schleiermacher had once described as the "sensible self-consciousness, a third faculty on the same level as mind and will that is closely related to imagination (which itself is an active capacity, not a moment of pure receptivity). Gone was the category of immediate self-consciousness, and with that, the first of the two elements that made Schleiermacher's theology of consciousness to be critical. The feeling of absolute dependence had been abandoned. In its place was what Troeltsch called "the Christian principle." Whence did Troeltsch derive this principle? "Formulating the principle itself involves a historical intuition that extends over the entire range of manifestations, but it also involves pointing toward the future direction the principle will take."³⁶ Historical intuition with regard to what has shown itself to be the driving idea that has come to expression in all the totality of church life in its historical development is the key here. And the result? In keeping with his concern to secure the freedom of the individual from determination by the material conditions of life, Troeltsch found this principle in the following formula. "We define the Christian principle—which will serve as the basis for all subsequent discussion—in this way: Christianity is the general, decisive breakthrough in principle to a religion of *personality*, opposed to all naturalistic and anti-personalistic understandings of God."³⁷ In place of the feeling of absolute dependence, we find in Troeltsch a principle constructed by means of historical study that has been carried out under the guidance of an "intuition" as to the driving idea that is alleged to have come to expression in varied historical manifestations but in fact owes much to what Troeltsch acknowledged to be the modern "worldview."³⁸

³⁵ Ernst Troeltsch, "What Does 'Essence of Christianity' Mean?" in Morgan and Pye, eds., *Ernst Troeltsch: Writings on Theology and Religion*, 133.

³⁶ Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre*, 71; E.T., 63.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Troeltsch, "What Does 'Essence of Christianity' Mean?", 133.

Gone, finally, is the second decisive element that made Schleiermacher's theology to be critical. Schleiermacher's careful elaboration of an "otherness" of God that would allow for no confusion of God and the world has been replaced by an "interpenetration" [*Ineinander*] of divine spirit and human spirit.³⁹ Where in Schleiermacher, religion was the result of a moment of pure receptivity on the side of the human, divine causality encountering human causality as a sovereign and free power, in Troeltsch, religion is the result of a coincidence of divine spirit and human spirit that makes the individual to be a person capable of cultivating in him/herself the values of personality (e.g., dominance over the material conditions of life).⁴⁰ And with this loss of the "otherness," the sheer nongiveness of God, there also takes place the loss of any real need for communal discernment. Schleiermacher's theology was ecclesial in the final analysis precisely because it was critical; because he knew that human beings could never simply lay hold of God and that, as a consequence, theology must be communal. It was not just that the experience of redemption was communal, because communally mediated. Theology itself *had to be* communal because the process of critical self-correction necessitated by the lack of human control of the subject-matter of theology was a process less subject to personal whim when carried out communally and in conversation with scripture and tradition. But in Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre* as "church dogmatics" has been replaced by *Glaubenslehre* as a tool for furthering the development of "personality."⁴¹

What is clear from all of this is that Troeltsch was not wrong when he said that "scarcely one stone of Schleiermacher's own teaching can remain upon another"⁴² if Troeltsch's program was to be fulfilled. Where Troeltsch was wrong was in thinking that he could make all of these changes and still be carrying out Schleiermacher's program. What Troeltsch's *Glaubenslehre*

³⁹ It may seem strange that Troeltsch should contend that "Schleiermacher's dogmatics is everywhere saturated with pantheistic thinking, shot through and through with an atmosphere that breathes heavily of Spinoza and Goethe" when he himself would appear to have committed himself to a form of pantheism. What keeps his own conception free of pantheism in Troeltsch's view, however, is the above-mentioned insistence on the incommensurability of matter and spirit. Troeltsch thinks that one only has a tendency towards pantheism where one allows reality to be reduced to materiality. There and there alone does one have a true monism.

⁴⁰ The concept of revelation which undergirds this conception of religion is that of "an inner stimulation that proceeds from the mysterious connection of the divine and human spirits, which denotes the whole of the inner life, with its religious and ethical convictions and values"—"a breaking-through of a disposition out of the unity of divine and human spirit" that leads to "trust." See Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre*, 41, 49, 52; E.T., 41, 47, 49.

⁴¹ Barth would later call "personality" the "idol of the century." See Barth, *Der Römerbrief (Erste Fassung)* 1919, ed. Hermann Schmidt (Zürich: TVZ, 1985), 272.

⁴² See above, n. 12.

shared with Schleiermacher's, at the end of the day, was the name only. To acknowledge this much helps us to understand how Barth could have been so wrong in so many of the criticisms he directed towards Schleiermacher. Barth's critique was, in a good many of its main lines, not valid for Schleiermacher. But it was valid for Troeltsch. Barth's problem was that he never succeeded in distinguishing Schleiermacher from Troeltsch. My own guess is that he suspected that a confusion of this nature was at work; hence, he could never simply reject Schleiermacher as he had, from the very beginning of his studies, rejected Troeltsch.

It remains for me now to suggest, in brief outline, why I think that Barth is a more genuine heir of Schleiermacher's real concerns than was Troeltsch. Notice that I do not say that Barth was a heir of Schleiermacher's theology in any direct fashion. Barth's theology was not a theology of consciousness. But his theology was critical and it is that which joins him so directly to Schleiermacher's concerns and makes him a genuine representative of Schleiermacher.

III. THE RETURN OF 'CHURCH DOGMATICS' IN THE SCHLEIERMACHERIAN TRADITION

Karl Barth's theology was born of an effort to overcome historicism and psychologism in theology. Central to this effort was the conceptualization of the revelation of God as a *dandum* (a "giving") rather than a *datum* (a "given"), something that must be given anew in each new moment and not a secure possession. And it was precisely here that Barth came within hailing distance of Schleiermacher. For Schleiermacher, too, revelation was a "giving," not a "given." It was the consequence of a divine causality which exercised its effect in and through creaturely causality without setting aside the difference between the two.

But, of course, the frame of reference in which this conception of revelation was worked out entailed a fairly dramatic departure from Schleiermacher. Where Schleiermacher worked out his concept of revelation in terms of an analysis of the Christian's religious self-consciousness, Barth grounded his conception in the *Göttingen Dogmatics* in Christology. The element of indirection that preserved the divine otherness in the act of revelation was preserved in Barth's thought not by a critical distinction between immediate and sensible self-consciousness but by an actualistic understanding of the ancient anhypostatic-enhypostatic Christology—and this certainly constituted an important shift away from Schleiermacher. Like Troeltsch, Barth too could no longer make use of the category of immediate

self-consciousness or the feeling of absolute dependence which comes to expression on that level. But unlike Troeltsch, Barth was able to elaborate a conception of revelation which preserved the critical element which was so basic to Schleiermacher's achievement.

A. Revelation

The heartbeat of Barth's conception of revelation in the *Göttingen Dogmatics* is the notion of indirectness.⁴³ God does not reveal Himself directly to human beings but only indirectly, through various media of His choosing. The relation of God to these media is that of a unity-in-differentiation, although the basis for the unity in question varies depending on the medium in question. The primary medium of God's Self-revelation, *the* medium through which the Self-mediation of God's knowledge of Himself takes place, is, of course, the humanity of Jesus. The unity in this case is understood in terms of the ancient category of a hypostatic union of two natures in a single subject that is identified with the eternal Logos, the second Person of the Trinity. Given the intimacy of this form of a unity-in-differentiation, Christology constitutes the basis upon which all God's other acts of Self-revelation takes place—whether in Holy Scripture or in preaching that is based upon Holy Scripture. Jesus Christ is revelation itself. Holy Scripture constitutes the primary *witness* to that revelation; preaching that is based on Holy Scripture constitutes a secondary and derivative witness. The relation of God to these witnesses stands in an analogical and participatory relation to that primary unity-in-differentiation that characterizes the God-human, Jesus Christ. Here we are not dealing with a unity constituted by the singularity of the subject in which two "natures" are grounded; we are dealing with a unity that arises through a relation of correspondence. Revelation is an act of God's grace in which He takes up the creaturely media of scripture and preaching and gives to them a capacity that they do not possess in and for themselves to bear adequate witness to God. In that this occurs, the media *correspond* to revelation itself. In this relation of correspondence, they participate actualistically in that primary form of unity-in-differentiation which is Jesus Christ. They obtain a *share* in God's act of Self-revelation.⁴⁴

⁴³ The passages to which appeal might be made in support of this claim are legion. The following examples are merely illustrative. Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 57-9, 138, 144, 151, 158, 160, 329-39.

⁴⁴ Already in the *Göttingen Dogmatics*, Barth elaborates a doctrine of the Word of God in a threefold form and he understands the relation of these three forms (Jesus Christ, Holy Scripture, and preaching) as standing in an analogical relation to the unity-in-differenti-

The element of indirectness of which I spoke a moment ago is a function of the fact that however the element of unity in the complex act of God's Self-revelation is established, the unity in question does not set aside the ontological difference between God and the human media. God remains God; the medium remains a creaturely medium.⁴⁵ As the two "natures" of Christ are unimpaired in their original integrity in the act of hypostatic union,⁴⁶ so also God remains ontologically other than the media of Holy Scripture and preaching. It is this difference that creates the indirectness. Our knowledge of God is indirect and not direct; indirect, because we do not confront God directly but only in hiddenness, only in a veil, only in concealment.⁴⁷ The net effect of this act of veiling is that God can only be known where God grants the eyes of faith to "see" what is hidden beneath the veil. The veil must be lifted. This unveiling of God in and through a creaturely veil constitutes an irreversible relation.⁴⁸ God remains the Subject of the event throughout. In that He conceals Himself in a veil, He makes Himself to be "objective" to the human knower in such a way that His freedom to be the Subject of the event is preserved.

As with Schleiermacher's conception of revelation, so also with Barth's: revelation itself can never become a direct "given." It is a "giving," ever to be renewed, moment by moment. It is not a "given." "Revelation is not a direct

ation that is the Trinity. "The Word of God on which dogmatics reflects . . . is one in three and three in one: revelation, scripture, and preaching—the Word of God as revelation, the Word of God as scripture, and the Word of God as preaching, neither to be confused nor separated. One Word of God, one authority, one power, and yet not one but three addresses. Three addresses of God in revelation, scripture, and preaching, yet not three Words of God, three authorities, truths, or powers, but one. Scripture is not revelation, but from revelation. Preaching is not revelation or scripture, but from both. But the Word of God is scripture no less than it is revelation, and it is preaching no less than it is scripture. Revelation is from God alone, scripture is from revelation alone, and preaching is from revelation and scripture. Yet there is no first or last, no greater or less." *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 332: "Directly, plainly, and in itself . . . our knowledge has to do with a medium. This medium can impart the knowledge of God to us. But this already means indirect impartation. The medium in itself does not impart the knowledge."

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 138: "The real deity and the real humanity must be so united that neither can be changed into the other or mixed with it. The relation must be an open and loose one inasmuch as the deity does not pass into the humanity or the humanity become identical with the deity. Otherwise it would no longer be God that meets us, or he would cease to meet us truly. On no side then, can the union become an equation. It must be a union in inequality, in differentiation. It must be a strictly dialectical union." Cf. p. 91, where Barth insists that there must be no "deifying of the creature."

⁴⁷ Among the many passages that could be chosen to illustrate the point, see *ibid.*, 329–31.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 330: "God does not set aside or reverse his irremovable and irreversible I. He does not cease to be God in his revelation. But he conceals his I in a relation in which we can share in his self-knowledge, in which he can meet us, in which we can stand before him."

openness on God's part but a becoming open."⁴⁹ Now, obviously, important differences of a material nature remain. The biggest difference is that Barth is able to affirm a real incarnation of God—and that is no small matter, obviously. For him, the indirectness of revelation is a function of the mode of God's Self-revelation in time. In Schleiermacher, it was a function of the effort to preserve the necessary distinction between the eternal God and temporalized human existence for the sake of safeguarding the feeling of absolute dependence. For this reason, the *content* of Schleiermacher's conception of revelation stood in closest proximity to that found in the second edition of Barth's commentary on *Romans*, not to that found in the *Göttingen Dogmatics*.⁵⁰ But this difference in content between Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* and Barth's *Göttingen Dogmatics* must not be allowed to blind us to the continuity on the formal level. Both affirm an indirect conception of revelation in the absence of which neither theology could have been "critical" in the sense of limiting the grasp of human knowing in order to make room for divine action in revelation. What this continuity on the level of the critical character of their respective theologies means for the relationship of Barth's dogmatic method in comparison with Schleiermacher's will be the final question I will take up here.

B. Dogmatic Method(s) in the *Göttingen Dogmatics*

Barth's discussion of dogmatic method in the *Göttingen Dogmatics* does not prepare us adequately for what he does in doctrinal construction. The method he advocates in his prolegomena is the dialectical method of pitting statement over against counter-statement.⁵¹ That method is employed in the dogmatics, above all in the doctrine of God's attributes. But we will not have come even close to a complete description of Barth's methods—and they really are methods (in the plural)—if we stop there.

In my first book on Barth, I described the methods employed in the *Göttingen Dogmatics* as a combination of a "Sentence Commentary" approach that substitutes Heinrich Heppe's *Reformed Dogmatics* for Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as the basic text with the *loci communes* approach of Philip Melanch-

⁴⁹ Ibid., 58.

⁵⁰ As to the content of revelation, Barth insisted that nothing that is proper to the being of God as God is left behind in the incarnation of the Son and the outpouring of the Spirit in time. The presence of God to us in revelation is the presence of God, complete, whole, and entire. "God's hiddenness, his incomprehensibility, is his hiddenness not alongside or behind revelation but *in* it." Ibid., 88–95.

⁵¹ Ibid., 309–12.

thon.⁵² That interpretation certainly got at something central to Barth's approach. But it left one significant factor out of account—which is easily missed due to Barth's protest against the employment of a "material principle" in Christian theology. Barth's protest was not only motivated by a desire to obviate the possibility of speculation in dogmatics, though that too played a role. His real concern was with those dogmatics that elevated some one Christian doctrine above the others and sought to deduce the contents of the others from the one that had been made basic. It was the fear of the arbitrary that led Barth to oppose the elevation of one doctrine above the others and to desecrate the analytical method by means of which its contents would be unfolded. Barth claimed to find this approach in the dogmatics of C.E. Luthardt, Albrecht Ritschl, Julius Kaftan, F.A.B. Nitzsch, and Ernst Troeltsch.⁵³

But Barth had a "material principle" in a quite different sense than that against which he raised objection. What I will demonstrate in my forthcoming book is that Barth substituted for Schleiermacher's feeling of absolute dependence the dialectic of veiling and unveiling in revelation. Like Schleiermacher before him, Barth was very concerned to eliminate any *a priori* speculative principles from the realm of dogmatics. But he was also convinced that he had learned to understand revelation as indirect in his sense, i.e., as occurring by means of a *Realdialektik* of veiling and unveiling, from an attentive and faithful "following-after" of revelation in its actuality.⁵⁴ And—and this is the truly decisive point—he used his *a posteriori* "material principle" not analytically but critically and heuristically, just as Schleiermacher had employed his feeling of absolute dependence throughout his *Glaubenslehre*. "Critically": that means as a tool for establishing the limits of what can be said within the realm of dogmatics and avoiding errors in doctrinal construction. "Heuristically": that means as a tool for assimilating the witness of Holy Scripture to particular doctrinal themes and the witness of tradition to that witness. In most cases, both uses are at play in the same context. I will give one brief example of this and then conclude.

The example is taken from Barth's doctrine of humanity, paragraph 22 of the *Göttingen Dogmatics* which bears the title "The Human as God's Creature." The starting point for reflection is, once again, revelation. And so when Barth asks already in paragraph 4, "What must man be because

⁵² Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909–1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 349.

⁵³ Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics*, 300.

⁵⁴ Find a reference to "following-after."

revelation is?,"⁵⁵ he has already indicated the methodological course he will pursue in the more material consideration of the doctrine of humanity in paragraph 22. The starting-point in revelation means that Barth will not be concerned in the object of his reflections with the human as she appears in natural-scientific, historical-psychological, or philosophical modes of consideration.⁵⁶ The object of his reflection is the human as she is addressed by God in revelation. And here a critical use of revelation understood in terms of the dialectic of veiling and unveiling announces itself. Neither the materialist nor the idealist accounts of the human, whatever truths may come to expression in them, may control a truly theological anthropology.⁵⁷ If God has deigned to address us in and through creaturely media of His choosing, then we may not look away from what we are seen to be in this situation as though it had not happened.

Barth's concentration upon the concrete situation of revelation then enables him to make a transcendental move that takes the following form: given that revelation is as I have described it to be, what must we say about the human recipient of revelation? What Barth is trying to gain access to by means of his starting-point in the situation of revelation is an understanding of the human as created; that which the human is "essentially." The move Barth makes here differs in an obvious way from that found in more classical forms of Protestant theology. In those earlier theologies, if one wanted to know something about the human as created, one turned immediately to Genesis 1 and 2 and to those passages scattered through scripture that constituted a gloss or commentary on Genesis 1 and 2. But Barth begins with the concrete situation of revelation because, as he contends, "*In* and with the address of God to man in His revelation is given, in the first instance, a definite knowledge of the being [*das Wesen*] of man as such."

What do we learn from the concrete situation of revelation? As God "speaks with me in veiling *and* unveiling, so also I myself am a remarkable parable, a suitable recipient of his Word: visible *and* invisible reality. Just as revelation would not be revelation if it were not both veiling *and* unveiling, not next to one another but rather in and with one another, in the same way man would not be man if he were not body *and* soul."⁵⁸ Expressed more expansively: what we learn from the concrete situation of revelation is that the human belongs with the rest of creation, as having a material nature. She

⁵⁵ Ibid., 72.

⁵⁶ Karl Barth, "Unterricht in der christlichen Religion", Zweiter Band: *Die Lehre von Gott / Die Lehre vom Menschen*, 1924-25 (Zürich: TVZ, 1990), 344.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 350.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 350-1.

stands before a medium of revelation that, in its empirical givenness, its "materiality," constitutes a barrier between herself and God that she, in her bodily limitations of sense experience, may not penetrate.⁵⁹ In this, she finds that she corresponds in one aspect of her being to one aspect of the nature of revelation itself.

But in that she is also made a recipient of revelation, she learns something more about herself. She learns that she is more than her bodily existence. Without ceasing to be a veil, the veil is made "transparent" to her. God is unveiled in and through the veil of human words. And from this she learns that she is also "soul," an act of cognition, a thinking substance as the ancients used to put it, in the mode of thinking and willing. "In that God addresses man, he recognizes himself to have been created by God for the perception and reception of His Word [which is] not only a physical but precisely also a psychic, spiritual operation."⁶⁰ What takes place when the veil is "lifted" is that the human receives a word that engages both her mind and her will, that has rational, communicable content and that lays a claim upon her.

Clearly the transcendental move that I have described belongs to the critical function of the concept of revelation. For in beginning with the concrete situation of revelation, Barth is ruling out of court in a theological anthropology any other approaches.

Armed with this understanding of the human, Barth then turns in subsection 3 to a consideration of the Christian tradition as it comes to expression primarily, though not exclusively, in Heinrich Hepppe's *Reformed Dogmatics*. It is here that the heuristic use of the dialectic of veiling and unveiling comes into play (in combination with a critical use). He uses his understanding of revelation, and the doctrine of the human as created that is entailed by it, in order critically to assimilate traditional teaching, to strip it of certain philosophical elements in order then to find in its critically received form, a confirmation of the understanding he has advanced to this point. The traditional Reformed understanding of the human as a body-soul unity is affirmed, but on a basis quite different from that on which it was originally constructed. The metaphysical-philosophical elements have been stripped away. What remains is a strictly theological account of the human as body and soul. The details of this discussion need not detain us any longer. It is important to

⁵⁹ Ibid., 347. The one who is confronted by God in the Self-mediation of knowledge of Himself stands on the boundary of her creatureliness at the point where an "abyss" between God and herself opens up and true transcendence of God begins (a transcendence that is not a human projection but the reality of God in the act of unveiling Himself in and through a veil that, in itself, remains a veil).

⁶⁰ Ibid., 353.

point out that the examples could easily be multiplied. It is not just in the doctrine of humanity that the dialectic of veiling and unveiling plays the role that I have described. In doctrine after doctrine, this is the case. So what I have shown in relation to the doctrine of humanity is meant to only be suggestive.

The dialectic of veiling and unveiling never disappeared from Barth's theology. But with the publication of his revised doctrine of election in *CD* II/2, the critical and heuristic roles that I have pointed to here were taken over by Barth's Christology. The christocentrism that most people associate with the later Barth's theology is a function of his doctrine of election. That the critical and heuristic functions continued to be played by a doctrine complex at all, however, is proof enough that the methodological lessons learned in Göttingen would not be forgotten in the move to Basel.

CONCLUSION

So why should any of this matter? Why should it matter to anyone that Barth's relationship to Schleiermacher was not simply oppositional but also embraced elements of continuity? The historian of doctrine in me would like to answer: "Setting the record straight is reason enough. A historian does not need a bigger reason than that." But the systematic theologian in me will not rest content with that answer.

It is my conviction that the nineteenth century is still with us. It has been chastened in some quarters, but it has shown surprising resiliency in its originating forms in other quarters. I think, in relation to the last-named development, of the resurgence of interest in the German-language sphere in early German idealism: in Fichte, in Schelling, in Hegel, in the early Schleiermacher of the *Speeches*. Even Emanuel Hirsch is once again attracting a good deal of attention. Chastened adherents of nineteenth-century theology will admit that there is a certain point in postmodern criticism of the modern project, but they will not concede that the project was simply wrong. Where postmodernism has taken the step of saying that there are no "grand metanarratives," the death of theology must surely follow. But the true "foundations" of theology are a "giving," not a "given." This may mean the end of foundationalism but it does not mean the end of foundations. The true foundations of all truth claims whatsoever are to be found in the being-in-act of the triune God. But insofar as these "foundations" always elude the grasp of the human attempt to know and establish them from the human side, they cannot be "demonstrated" philosophically or in any other way.

And it is because that is so that both the later Schleiermacher and the early Barth continue to have so much relevance today. These were theologians who took seriously the limits of human knowing and experiencing. Both passed through a period of serious romantic influence. Both wrote books that reflected that romantic edge—Schleiermacher with his *Speeches* and Barth with his commentaries on *Romans*. But both also recognized that the churches cannot live from criticism alone. Theology must go on to say something positive if the churches are to be fed and nourished. Without losing sight for a moment of the lessons they had learned in their romantic phases, they both went on to write “church dogmatics” that were, at one and the same time, majestic in their scope and modest in the claims they made for themselves. [Barth’s, at least, could probably have afforded to be a little less majestic!]

Neither Schleiermacher nor Barth was “postmodern.” But both anticipated in their own ways a number of the valid insights that have emerged in so-called “postmodernism.” My own guess is that “postmodernism” is a storm that is already moving off the coast, and heading out to sea where it will simply blow itself out. What will remain are those theologies that are able to combine academic rigor with ecclesial concern in the setting of a modernity that is now more chastened than before. What will remain are theologies like those of Schleiermacher and Barth.

Awesome Music, Great Preaching, and Revolutionary Action: The Mind of Martin Luther King, Jr.

by ROBERT M. FRANKLIN

Robert M. Franklin, President of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, is the author of two books, Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African American Thought (1997), and Another Day's Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis (1997), as well as coauthor of From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate (2000). He delivered this Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture in Miller Chapel on April 1, 2002.

AS A CONCESSION TO A culture profoundly shaped by televised images, I invite you to consider my nomination for the nation's most significant icon depicting religion as a positive force in securing civil and human rights. It is the familiar portrait of Dr. King delivering his "I Have a Dream" oration from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The image is so familiar that we may fail to grasp its extraordinary, multidimensional character. The black Baptist preacher standing at the foot of the monument of the emancipator is a stunning, riveting symbol suggestive of many values and issues that interest those of us who think about religion and civil rights.

For instance, in the portrait one encounters religion restraining its sectarian energies and harnessing them in the service of public order. Also, one sees a representative of a particular, Christian view of ultimacy standing in solidarity with other faith traditions. And, one perceives in the King/Lincoln juxtaposition, the graceful and mysterious power of religious faith to transform frail human beings into courageous exemplars of moral citizenship.

In that 1963 portrait, Lincoln was but a figure carved and captured in marble, his complexity and contradictions concealed in cold stone. Before the stone stood a vibrant incarnation of the indomitable African American spirit of authentic freedom. Recall the manner in which he began the famous speech. "Fivescore years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. . . ." With those words King paid respect to one of the nation's sacred ancestors, underscored the rude fact that Lincoln's agenda was unfinished, and positioned or presented himself as a moral successor to the slain president.

Also in that extraordinary speech, King drew upon the two major philosophical traditions that have shaped the American culture and character: the covenant tradition expressed in a biblical understanding of American exceptionalism (New Israel); and the Enlightenment tradition of Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, and those who asserted the inviolable rights of the individual. No one was more skilled at interweaving the great and noble ideas from varying symbolic traditions.

Recall his words that day as he placed his dream in the context of the hard work that was before his listeners. "Even though we must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." King believed that a dream inspired by particularist, biblical sources could live in dialectical and fruitful tension with ideals embraced by nontheistic rationalists. "I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight and the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

King did not merely search for common ground, he sought to create it out of the stuff of living traditions. In so doing, he was able to use theology and ethics as resources for renewing American public life. His public theology prompted people to vote, to run for office, and to be concerned about the moral hygiene of the society. A person who seeks to create common ground, build traditions, craft narratives, and negotiate coalitions exemplifies a quality of character that moral education should seek to inculcate.

We should also acknowledge that using theology and ethics as resources for renewing public life can have unforeseen negative consequences. For instance, many religious people who regard the concept of grace as central and significant to their faith may construe it to mean that they are acceptable to God despite their admitted racist behavior and attitudes, or their indifference to racial justice. Some people suggest that America in the post-civil rights movement era has come a long way through hard work and heroic effort, and that to push further might be counterproductive. We should now focus on celebrating our progress rather than rousing bitter feelings by advocating additional progress. Grace, thereby, becomes a psychological mechanism that absolves responsibility for the condition of contemporary race relations and civil rights. This is the double edge of grace. Ironically, the theological shift from "salvation by works" to "salvation by grace" authorizes complacency with the racial status quo. King understood, clearly, that the Bible and theological concepts could be misappropriated to justify social evil

and felt that an important check upon this tendency would involve keeping the Bible and human reason in mutually critical dialogue. I will have more to say about this later.

I will provide: (1) a brief sketch of the character of black church culture that illustrates how a marginalized and particular religious tradition helped to renew democracy during the modern civil rights movement; and, (2) an analysis of Dr. King's concept of the "beloved community" as an ethical norm that should be used to critique, guide, and inspire public policy and individual behavior; and, (3) a brief overview of the heroic role that faith communities are playing now to revive civil society.

I. THE REVOLUTION LED BY PREACHERS, CHURCH WOMEN, AND SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN

In order to understand Dr. King's journey from Atlanta to the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, we need to understand something about the culture that produced him, and thereby, revisit the ways in which culture is a vehicle of moral education. Paul Tillich said that culture is the form of religion, and religion is the substance of culture. If these claims are true, what system of values is available to children being reared in neighborhoods that are scarred by violent crime, adult joblessness, multigenerational dependence, aimlessness, disease, hopelessness, and wretched schools?

King's biographers all note that the black church and family were the contexts in which the boy King learned something about racism, poverty, and religion as a resource for mobilizing social change. James Cone has gone further to note that the culture of the black church included serious theological concepts that played a critical role in shaping King's world view and moral compass. These included notions of human freedom, social justice, black self-love, and collective power.

Historians such as Albert Raboteau, the late James Melvin Washington, and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham have noted that black church culture is an amalgam of numerous symbolic and ritual traditions including African traditional religions, Catholic popular piety, Protestant evangelicalism, and Islam. This collection of symbolic traditions infused the core practices of progressive African American Christianity that produced King.

These core practices of the ecology of black folk congregations include the following: (1) A multi-sensory worship experience in which all of a human being's capacity to respond to God is engaged. Worship is conceived to be a sacred drama, a dance with the gods. Hence, drums are present to orchestrate the antiphonal call and response between the people and the deity. Colorful

choir robes and clergy vestments provide visual stimulation. Brass horns, electric guitars, tambourines, and clapping hands electrify the air with sound. Usually, the church kitchen is in operation sending aromas of soul food wafting throughout the neighborhood. And, this sacred space is animated by lots of touching, hugging, holy kissing, and high five greetings that collapse the social distance that is common in secular spaces.

(2) A second practice is that of intimate communal prayer. Worshippers are invited to leave their seats and gather in the front of the sanctuary, often to hold hands during prayer. When led by a skilled leader, such prayer succeeds in weaving detached individuals into a community of pain, struggle, reconciliation, and hope. Worshippers who approach the altar as individuals absorbed in their own problems may experience a transformation that sends them away as members of the body of Christ.

(3) Triumphant singing occurs as choirs give voice to the church's confidence that it will not be vanquished by evil in the world. Triumphal songs are contextually rational and appropriate if those who sing them regard themselves as warriors in the midst of a great and bloody conflict between good and evil. Recall the song, "I'm a Soldier in the Army of the Lord." The black church has always encouraged and celebrated musical virtuosity among exceptional artists. Consider the careers of Aretha Franklin, Mahalia Jackson, Thomas Dorsey, and nearly all of the artists that made Motown famous. All of them were products of congregations that identified their God-given gifts and gave them opportunities to use those gifts to the glory of God. As many of these artists evolved musically and began careers in so-called 'secular music', many church folk expressed sorrow over the loss or 'fall' of a former church singer.

But the civil rights movement moved to the beat of the awesome music that was a product of the church, to be sure yet was clearly something more and something different and unique, indeed a hybrid of sacred and secular song. Often, church music was transformed by the freedom marchers. But often music born in the streets or in explicitly secular venues was transformed and brought into the church. This street hymnody possessed very specific characteristics. Songs that would be freedom songs had to be marcher-friendly or possess rhythm that could be easily adapted to marching. The songs also had to be improvisationally porous and malleable. Marchers must be able to add their own lyrics to those that they inherited. Songs had to be mass-friendly, that is, capable of being sung by people without exceptional voices. Songs that required a virtuoso soloist never lasted very long in the freedom march hymnody. But anyone could lead the popular song, 'This Little Light of Mine' or 'Ain't Going to Let Nobody Turn Me Round.' Finally, the street

sacred songs were chants that required and evoked antiphonal participation. Phenomenologists of orature such as chanting, meditation rituals, and prayer suggest that repetitive utterances can have a calming, therapeutic effect upon the chanters.

(4) Prophetic preaching in the black church tradition is the focal point of worship. It is the high, holy moment in the liturgical drama. The brilliant University of Chicago historian of religion, Mircea Eliade has observed that "for people in traditional societies religion is a means of extending the world spatially upward so that communication with the other world becomes ritually possible, and extending it temporally backward so that the paradigmatic acts of the gods and mythical ancestors can be continually re-enacted and indefinitely recoverable."¹ Eliade helps to illumine the genius of black preaching as he reminds us that words can be deployed to mediate an encounter with the holy. Words can open the imagination into a transcendent realm where one may be empowered to give one's life on behalf of a noble cause. The black preacher, through the virtuosity of imaginative, narrative, lyrical, and poetic language and the co-creativity of a responsive congregation, unites the sacred and the human realms. Stated briefly, the entire liturgical culture of progressive black churches nurture political sensibilities. These are the congregations that shape moral character and teach people to care about the moral hygiene of the society. The complex process by which Black preachers pursue this task is wonderfully described and analyzed by Dr. Cleo LaRue in his fine book on homiletics, *What Makes Black Preaching Distinctive?*

Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann offers a cogent observation about such transformative liturgy: "Every act of a minister who would be prophetic is part of a way of evoking, forming, and reforming an alternative community. This applies to every facet and every practice of ministry. It is a measure of our enculturation that the various acts of ministry (for example, counseling, administration, even liturgy) have taken on lives and functions of their own rather than being seen as elements of the one prophetic ministry of formation and reformation of alternative community."²

Bruggemann's comment about "alternative community" reminds us again of King's dream narrative, and the fact that it was crafted in the genre of a sermon rather than as essay, philosophical argument, or lecture. King and his

¹ Cited by Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 31-2.

² Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 14.

counterparts were products of a liturgical culture that cultivated the capacity to engage in utopian discourse and to act boldly to achieve moral causes.

I shall have more to say about utopian discourse, black Christian preaching, and political theology when we consider King's notion of the beloved community.

The Underside of American Christianity

It is perplexing to consider that Christianity has had two thousand years to eradicate the multiple and overlapping forms of oppression based upon ethnicity, race, creed, culture, region, class, and gender but has failed to do so. Why is this the case? And more to the point of our discussion, why have not Protestantism and Catholicism succeeded in canceling the power and grip of racism on the minds and behavior of the masses of their adherents? Is this a theological crisis? Does the tradition possess the resources to address racism in a compelling manner? Is it a human and cultural crisis that represents, yet again, the depths and variety of human sinful nature?

King framed it poignantly when he noted the following in his "Letter From Birmingham Jail":

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious-education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: 'What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?'³

Although prophetic religion should hold the state accountable for the moral exercise of power, when religion goes astray who can call it back to its foundation? This is where King's methodological and symbolic eclecticism proved valuable. The biblical and the Enlightenment traditions could critique and correct each other.

³ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 91.

Returning to my earlier comments about King's preaching as an instance of utopian discourse, I would like briefly to discuss the central norm in King's political theology.

The Beloved Community as a Political and Ethical Norm

Moral philosopher and former Clinton domestic policy advisor William Galston has noted that "utopian thought is the political branch of moral philosophy" and that among its many functions it guides our deliberation in devising courses of action, justifies our actions so that the grounds of action are reasons that others ought to accept, and serves as the basis for the evaluation of existing institutions and practices."⁴ Utopian discourse becomes moral discourse as it seeks to guide action. It enables us to "imaginatively reconcile and transmute" the "contradictions of experience."

In his final book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, King noted that the "good and just society is neither the thesis of capitalism nor the antithesis of Communism, but a socially conscious democracy which reconciles the truths of individualism and collectivism." He characterized his political philosophy with the terms "democratic socialism." In his November 1966 Gandhi Memorial Lecture at Howard University, he said, "Public accommodations did not cost the nation anything; the right to vote did not cost the nation anything. Now we are grappling with basic class issues between the privileged and underprivileged. In order to solve this problem, not only will it mean the restructuring of American society but it will cost the nation something. . . ."⁵

King had always been attentive to the economic dimensions of authentic liberation. At the end of his life, his public ministry focused upon highlighting the nation's moral obligations to improve the economic plight of the least advantaged members of the community, to borrow a phrase from the eminent Harvard philosopher, John Rawls. When King was killed in Memphis, he was working on behalf of sanitation workers, and he was headed back to Washington, D.C. to lead a national "poor people's campaign." Ironically, had he lived there would have been another great speech and another iconic photograph to juxtapose with the 1963 image.

And let us not be hasty in dismissing the "I Have a Dream" oration in 1963. For in it, King was engaged in the analysis of political, economic, and cultural oppression requisite of any serious public theologian or intellectual. But, in

⁴ William A. Galston, *Justice and the Human Good* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 14-5.

⁵ King Center Archives.

his poetic imagination, he was engaged in projecting a vision of America's possibility. By seeing a new nation, liberated of its racism and classism (he did not say enough publicly about sexism or oppression experienced by homosexuals), King was inviting others to embrace the vision and implement the policies and individual acts necessary to actualize this vision. In this sense, King was not engaged in other-worldly, escapist rhetoric, but a sophisticated form of moral and political philosophizing that was uncommon for public intellectuals of that time.

Faith Communities in Pursuit of The Beloved Community

Since President Bush announced his White House Faith Based and Community Initiatives, the nation has begun to pay closer attention to the community service activities and efficacy claims advanced by, and on behalf of, America's over 400,000 houses of worship. An impressive percentage of these congregations are engaged in working to improve the common good, not merely the well-being of those on their membership roles. This includes the over 70,000 African American congregations that were part of the coalition of conscience that sustained the Civil Rights Movement and expanded democracy.

In many distressed neighborhoods, congregations are the only indigenous institutions that have significant assets: talented leaders, credibility, track records of service, armies of potential volunteers, physical space, financial resources, and the spiritual goods necessary to sustain courage and hope amidst adversity. Long after other secular nonprofit service agencies disappear for lack of funding, or employers disappear because of the cost of doing business, or government agencies disappear due to devolution, churches are there to pick up the pieces of people's lives, affirming their dignity and feeding body and soul.

Congregations provide basic charity, sustained nurture, social service delivery, political advocacy on behalf of the poor, and comprehensive community development. Congregations and clergy are helping to sustain civil society and push back against the nihilism of which Cornel West speaks.

Faith communities are working to renew American democracy and, as such, have earned a seat at the table of future public/private ventures. The most creative leaders of the black church tradition understand that the future of the beloved community will depend upon expanding our notion of civil rights to include basic economic rights and the fruits of our labor. And churches and clergy are working overtime to ensure that they will be both leaders and partners in the community development enterprise.

Despite these resources and many others, the larger question remains, can religion provide something unique and significant to the pursuit of a just society? Many of the intellectuals and revolutionaries of the 1960s, tutored on the writings of Karl Marx, answered negatively. Religion was an opiate, they declared, that facilitates toleration of injustice. It was a delicious irony to many observers who noted that Black and White churches and prophetic Christianity mobilized far more people to risk their lives in the cause of freedom than did scientific socialist dogma. To be sure, some parishoners sought and found escapist refuge in the church. However, many others discovered that authentic biblical religion demanded radical political action in pursuit of justice. Thanks to liberation theologians in Central and South America, Black liberation theologians, feminist theologians, and a few secular critical theorists, it became possible to reread the prophets of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and clearly to perceive that God had an awful lot to say about how affluent, powerful people should relate to their less advantaged neighbors. Suddenly, many discovered that God has a substantive, not merely a procedural, political agenda that includes specific concerns for people with limited options and few material goods.

As religious leaders today have sought to apply this biblical agenda, or what the late theologian John Howard Yoder called "the politics of Jesus," they have felt the frustration of talking about justice, equality, and love in purely theological terms. Our largely secular society has found it possible to ignore such theological appeals preferring the rhetoric of politics and law. Politicians and lawyers have worked to marginalize the often fragmenting and contentious presence of sectarian religious people. And many religious leaders have reconciled themselves to a marginal role in public life and public policy.

However, some ministers and laypeople have resisted marginalization. Although some ministers have elected to run for public office—one thinks of Floyd Flake, Father Robert Drinan, Jesse Jackson, and Pat Robertson—bringing religious rhetoric into the public square (often in unhelpful ways), the majority have sought to find ways to talk about the biblical political agenda from the venue of the local parish. It is at that level that tough decisions have to be made about what one will and can say in public about the "hard questions" affecting national life.

Frustration with being regarded as "a marginal voice" often encourages clergy to embrace the language of the modern state. Preachers begin to talk like politicians, and while gaining some credibility as political power brokers, in the process they tend to lose the prophetic edge that they could and should bring to the political debate and to the process of imagining a better society.

This is a temptation to which Dr. King never yielded. He consistently employed theological concepts and language to challenge the modern state to be more just and inclusive. He opined on practical and concrete political matters, but only insofar as they were outgrowths of the theological and ethical principles he espoused.

It is humbling, hopeful, and empowering to consider that preachers, church women, and Sunday school children led a revolution in our lifetime. They marched, prayed, voted, and challenged the nation to, in the words of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "conform America's political reality to her political rhetoric." They have now passed the baton to us.

In the words of a great rabbi, "the world is equally balanced between good and evil, our next act will tip the scale."

Abraham Kuyper, South Africa, and Apartheid

by GEORGE HARINCK

George Harinck, Director of the Archives and Documentation Center of the Reformed Churches, Kampen, and staff member of the Historical Documentation Center for Dutch Protestantism at the Free University of Amsterdam, is the author of numerous publications on the history of Dutch Protestantism and its international relations. He delivered these remarks at the opening ceremony of the Abraham Kuyper Institute for Public Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, at the Nassau Inn on February 1, 2002.

LAST YEAR, WHEN I was a visiting scholar at Princeton Seminary, I was asked by my friend Max Stackhouse to write a book on Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) and apartheid. During my research I found out that since 1975 the topic of Kuyper and apartheid has been well known in the international academic world. And it is common knowledge in the English speaking world that Abraham Kuyper is one of the fathers of apartheid. But in the Netherlands this topic is rather unknown. Is that not strange?

Dutchmen know Kuyper of course. He founded one of the ten Dutch universities, the second largest Reformed denomination in the country, one of the three most influential political parties of the last century, and he was their prime minister from 1901 until 1905. The Dutch know about apartheid too. Many kuyperians were active in the anti-apartheid movement. Just because they were related to the white Reformed churches in South Africa, and just because the Free University was related to Potchefstroom University, the Dutch Calvinists were all the more opposed to apartheid. In the 1970s they severed their ties with white churches and white universities and started to support black churches and black universities instead. When Alan Boesak said that to the black South Africans “the God of the Reformed tradition was the God of slavery, fear, persecution, and death,”¹ the Dutch Calvinists blamed this on the Boers, not on Kuyper.

The absence of the Dutch in the international Kuyper-apartheid debate has not been noticed, but it is a missing link and it certainly influenced the course and scope of the debate. For example, the relation between Kuyper and South Africa, between his calvinism and the calvinism of the Boers, plays a formative role in the debate. Many South African, American, and English sources on this topic do contain some information on *what* Kuyper said about

¹ Allan Boesak, *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation, and the Calvinist Tradition*, ed. Leonard Sweetman (Maryknoll: Orbis 1984), 83.

South Africa, but they never tell *why* and *when* he said so. Kuyper is simply considered to be a Boer with the Boers and a calvinist with these calvinists. But in reality he had an ambivalent relationship with South Africa and its white inhabitants, and hundreds of pages have been written about it in Dutch.

Kuyper's interest in the Boer cause had two aspects: a national, and a calvinistic one. As for the national aspect, the Boers were a cognate people. The Dutch usually neglected them, but in the period of the Anglo-Boer wars, from 1880 until 1900, they changed their attitude and ardently supported the Boers against imperialistic Britain. Why this change? For a very interesting reason. The Netherlands was a small nation that feared its future as an independent nation in Europe. Germany was the rising power in the east, and England was the mighty world power at its west side. Under these conditions, the Boers functioned as an anchor of hope to the Dutch: in the Boer opposition to the British in Africa the Dutch recognized their will to survive in Europe. Kuyper was at the head of this nationwide pro-Boer movement. Petitions were offered to the British government, and streets and squares were named after famous Boer generals. But sympathy for the Boers vanished as suddenly as it had risen. When the Boers lost the war in 1902 the Dutch forgot about them, Kuyper included.

Soon after 1880 Kuyper was already disappointed by the Boers, not so much because they lost a war they never could have won, but because they were not interested in his calvinistic ideals. According to Kuyper a true Dutchman was a true calvinist, and in the Boers he had meant to find a true specimen of the classic God-fearing Dutchman. He even considered that the Boers might play a role in his plan to restore and renew the position of the Calvinists in church and society. But to his disappointment, the Boers were unwilling to set foot on Kuyper's stage. That is why he turned his back on them in the 1880s. His famous brochure on *The Crisis in South-Africa*, published in 1900, is more anti-British than it is pro-Boer.

Kuyper never went to South Africa and his decision to visit the United States and Princeton in 1898 is more than accidental. He had realized that the future for calvinism lay not in Africa, but in America. He easily left behind the nationalistic South African dimension of his calvinism, for it was calvinism, not nationalism that guided him. The fact that Kuyper's sympathy for the Boers was as serious as it was short, has only recently come to light in the international debate on Kuyper and apartheid. In recent years distinctions have been made between Kuyper and the South African interpretation of Kuyper, between Kuyper's neocalvinism and the calvinism of the Boers. As a result the role of Kuyper in the apartheid debate is diminishing. Had the

Dutch participated in the Kuyper-apartheid debate, such distinctions would have been drawn much earlier.

One possible reason the Dutch were absent from this international debate is that in the nineteenth, and for a long time in the twentieth century, race was not an issue in Dutch society. The impulse for Dutch involvement in the anti-apartheid movement was not their own experience with racial issues, but the fact that the Boers were related to them. The same was true in the nineteenth-century world of Kuyper. In his publications race is not a category. A clear example of this is that the distinction he made between white and colored people in his 1898 Stone lectures only appeared in the American edition.² In the Dutch edition it would have made no sense.

Race was not an issue in Kuyper's thinking. But it is clear that his publications presuppose the superiority of the white race and western civilization. Time and again he mentions the African people in a negative sense, for example in his Stone lectures—and his audience agreed with him. We deplore the fact that he did not unravel, but instead followed the prejudice of his time. Yet, his attitude towards race is not so monolithic that he should be considered an outright racist. Kuyper's Stone lectures do not argue for the superiority of race or civilization, but for the superiority of Christianity. It is not always easy to distinguish between the two, but it is clear that, for Kuyper, historic development is not a process determined by race. Neither is the superiority of race fixed, but can be lost by the white and gained by the yellow race—as Kuyper himself wrote. The black people that according to the exegesis of his days lived under the curse of Ham could receive the blessing of the Lord. Decisive in Kuyper's thinking on history and civilization is in the end not race or historic development, aspects that are beyond our control, but Christianity, and the human responsibility to choose for God.

According to Kuyper, "Calvinism was bound to find its utterance in the democratic interpretation of life; to proclaim the liberty of nations; and not to rest until both politically and socially every man, simply because he is man, should be recognized, respected and dealt with as a creature created after the Divine likeness."³ Later, Kuyperians recognized the historical limitations of Kuyper's scope and did not hesitate to add racism to the list of evils Kuyper's calvinism must combat.

² A. Kuyper, *Calvinism: six Stone-lectures*, (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York 1899), 271: "whether one is to be born as girl or boy, rich or poor, dull or clever, *white or coloured* or even as Abel or Cain, is the most tremendous predestination conceivable in heaven or on earth." The words in italics are missing in the Dutch edition.

³ Kuyper, *Calvinism*, 27.

They had good reason to do so, for there is evidence that Kuyper applied his calvinistic conviction of the equality and responsibility of man not only to the position of women or the poor, but to the position of colored people as well. In 1896 he formulated rules for church planting in the Dutch East Indies, where Kuyper's churches had their main mission field. In these rules he stated that, according to the gospel, different races and nations had to live together in one church. This unity might only be broken up in case of difference in language or confession.⁴

In 1901, the year Kuyper became prime minister of the Netherlands, he introduced an important change in Dutch colonial politics, when he introduced the so-called ethical policy. The basics of this policy were an application of his view of human equality and of the responsibility of people and races to spend their superiority in the service of God. In the program of his administration he described the responsibility of the Dutch nation towards the East-Indian peoples as guardianship, over against the realities of colonization or exploitation. The underlying idea is clear: the Netherlands were not allowed to abuse their superiority over the Dutch East Indies. I do not deny the paternalistic character of this view, but this policy marked a major advance over the nineteenth-century Dutch colonial policy of exploitation. And it shows that Kuyper was not guided by the cultural racism of his day, but by his calvinistic creed of human equality.

This is the way the Dutch understand Abraham Kuyper. They certainly do not have the final clue to all the challenging and sometimes disturbing opinions about Kuyper, but I hope I have made clear my case, that a Dutch kuyperian voice can add something to the international Kuyper debate and research. I am grateful that Princeton Seminary has shown a real interest in its historic Dutch connection, and I hope this Abraham Kuyper Institute for Public Theology will fuel the relationship and use its excellent location in Princeton Seminary to further the international Kuyper dialogue and outreach. I would like to congratulate Princeton on the opening of this Institute, also on behalf of the president of the Free University of Amsterdam, and I hope Max Stackhouse and his staff will succeed in making this Institute like the aeolian harp Kuyper wrote about at the end of his last Stone lecture: its strings tuned aright, ready in the window, awaiting the breath of the Spirit.

⁴ J.C. Adonis, *Die afgebreekte skeidsmuur weer opgebon: Die verstrengeling van die sendingsbeleid van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika met die praktyk en ideologie van die apartheid in historisch perspektief*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982), 59.

James Edwin Loder, Jr.: A Tribute

by FRED A. GARDNER

Freda A. Gardner, Thomas W. Synnott Professor of Christian Education Emerita, and Director of the School of Christian Education Emerita, delivered this memorial tribute before the Seminary faculty on February 13, 2002.

JAMES EDWIN LODER WAS born December 5, 1931 in Nebraska. Jim, as he was best known, spent his childhood years there. His father, Edwin, was an elementary school principal. His father and Frances, his mother, were not people of faith. When he was eight or nine years old, Jim began to attend church on his own and was supported in that by his parents. He had one sister, Katherine, known as Francey Kay, who followed their mother's interest in drama and theater and was an actress. A vivid and dramatic woman, she and Jim were very close and her death at an early age from complications of diabetes was wrenching for him. His father died while Jim was in his second year at Princeton. His death was deeply felt by his son who was greatly depressed for eight or nine months, during which time he also suffered from mononucleosis. Both he and his sister had a vision from which they received assurance that all was well with their father. This was to be the first of many experiences of the presence of God in Jim's life. Jim's mother died just a few years before he did in Austin, Texas where she had been on the faculty of the University, a prominent teacher in the fields of speech and drama.

Jim Loder attended Carlton College in Northfield, Minnesota and was graduated in 1953. He came to Princeton Theological Seminary and received the B.D. degree, as it was known then, in 1957. In 1958 he earned a Th.M. degree, with distinction, from Harvard Divinity School. In that program, he did Clinical Training at the Massachusetts Mental Health Clinic in Boston. Four years later, in 1958, Jim earned the Ph.D. from Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. He spent the last year of that program at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas. Jim was a Harvard Fellow for four years, a Research Assistant in the Harvard University Project on Religion and Mental Health, and the recipient of a Danforth Grant in Theology and Psychiatric Theory for his work at Menninger's. While a Princeton seminarian he served Hope Chapel in Lakewood, New Jersey and while at Harvard was at the North Christian Church in Fall River, Massachusetts.

James Loder came to the faculty of Princeton Seminary in 1962 as an Instructor in Christian Education. He was made an Assistant Professor in 1965, an Associate Professor in 1967, Professor in 1979, and in 1982 was named the Mary D. Synnott Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Edu-

cation. During his tenure at Princeton he was also a Guest Professor at Drew Theological Seminary and Guest Lecturer at both Harvard University Divinity School and Fuller Theological Seminary. Sabbatical leaves took him, with an A.A.T.S. Research Fellowship, to Institute Jean J. Rousseau in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968-69, to the Center of Theological Inquiry in 1980-81 and to Oxford University that same year, and again to the Center and to Harvard University as a Visiting Scholar in 1985-86. He received Princeton Seminary Fellowships in 1990-91 and again in 1993.

Jim was married to Arlene Carr and they became parents of two daughters: Kimberly, now an ordained minister, married, with three children and living in California and Tamara, also married and a lawyer, living in Minnesota. Kim and Tami were great joys in Jim's life and his love for them was matched by his pride in the women they became.

Jim Loder was a complex man. He was an emotional person who seemed most at ease in his head, a stereotypical scholar who seemed to want to be in touch with people in ordinary ways but most often retreated to emotional depths or to heights of intellectual realms to which only some could aspire or follow after him. It is interesting to recall that in his early days as a teacher at the Seminary there were frequent inquiries made as to whether or not he was a man of faith. Fresh from graduate work and his time at Menninger's, Jim never prayed or displayed much typical interest in matters of faith. It was apparent in private conversations, however, that he was rooted in faith, but his faith did not easily surface in public discourse. His experience of assurance at the time of his father's death had given him firsthand knowledge of the human-God connection, but he was not comfortable at this point with the personal. That he wrestled with profound matters of faith is clearly seen in his 1966 book, *Religious Pathology and the Christian Faith*.¹ He wanted so much to get it straight in his head and thereby to remove what he deemed to be thoughts that led to misunderstanding of the God-Man relationship. (And it was Man in those days.) Every year there were students who, with Jim's deep involvement with Kierkegaardian thought, were finding Jim's search for meaning a saving grace for their own lives. No student who ever came to Jim for help at whatever level failed to be impressed, and many confounded, by the intricate diagrams of his thought and hypotheses scribbled on his office chalkboard. Many, given a "tour" of Jim's thinking and gaining a sense that they understood what he was explaining, realized, almost before reaching the

¹ James E. Loder, *Religious Pathologies and the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966).

outer door, that they had been witnesses to something powerful and promising but without any certainty about what that was.

Like their professor before them, Jim's doctoral students and more than a few students in his M.Div and M.A. classes, encountered Kierkegaard and Freud and were drawn into a deeper wrestling with what it meant to be a Christian. It was not until Jim's own "transforming moment" that he and they had new language and imagery for that struggle. His book, *The Transforming Moment: Understanding Convictional Experiences*, published in 1981 and again in a revised edition in 1989,² allowed students, colleagues, and an increasing number of church groups to whom he spoke to grasp something with which many could identify as their own experiences. Rarely could their mentor and teacher tell them of his own experience without breaking down, revealing to all that this was not an advanced theory but a truly transforming experience that he had to share.

In a review of *The Transforming Moment*, Dr. Craig Dykstra, a Ph.D. student of Jim's, and later a colleague in Christian Education at Princeton, wrote,

"Part of Loder's task [in this book] is to ask [the] pressing questions [about people's experiences of religious phenomena such as visions, healings, ecstasies, other radically reorienting events]: What is going on here? 'How shall we tell the difference between subjective intoxication and the Divine Presence?' (p. vii). How can those who have had such experiences understand what has happened to them and live more authentically in the light of them? How can those who live and minister with such persons respond appropriately to them and learn from them?"³

James Loder, confronting his own transforming moment, would not repress his experience. In this book he explores the tendency to repress and offers

"a new understanding of the process and content of knowing as a reality" and a self-transforming event. Loder traces the processes of transformation in scientific knowing, esthetic knowing, therapeutic knowing, and convictional knowing. He shows how, in each case, knowing is initiated by conflict and struggle, includes our efforts to scan for resources and modes of resolution, draws deeply on personal

² James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment* (Colorado Springs: Helmors and Howard, 1989).

³ Craig Dykstra, review of *The Transforming Moment: Understanding Convictional Experiences*, by James E. Loder, *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 3 (1982): 339-41 (here 340).

intuition and the creative unconscious, leads to a revisioning of the environment, and enables a more vital way of understanding and living in it.

The process of knowing is similar in all cases, but the contexts are different in each type. In other forms of knowing, the context is composed of the two dimensions of self in relation to the 'lived world.' But in convictional knowing, the process is engaged in a four-dimensional context. One faces not only the self and the lived world. One also confronts the void—that reality which sucks meaning out of self and world, which manifests itself in 'absence, loss, shame, guilt, hatred, loneliness, and the demonic' (p. 83), and whose definitive metaphor is death. But not the void alone; also the Holy. At the heart of darkness is revealed the face of Divine Presence.

"In this four-dimensional context, Loder argues, conflicts of existential proportions to the self are borne and, when resolved, normatively reveal a transformed self and world related intimately to a loving God who upholds and renews the whole of being." In this book Loder follows Kierkegaardian logic to explore stories of conflict in scripture and "tells us, 'What we have come to understand in convictional knowing is how the objective truth of the revelation in Christ may be subjectively known. p. 122'."⁴

Dykstra's review, thoroughly appreciative of Loder's work, does, however, raise a question that concerned many who came to respect Loder's thesis, namely, "the role of communities of faith in human transformation."⁵

One of Jim Loder's greatest joys was his collaboration with his friend, Jim Neidhardt, a physicist at the New Jersey Institute of Technology until Neidhardt's death in 1992. Even a casual observer could not help but notice the delight on both men's faces when Neidhardt would arrive in the Christian Education office and Loder would appear at once to welcome him and escort him to his office where they would remain for hours, conversing, diagraming, and laughing, although few outside that office could imagine what, in their efforts, could possibly provoke laughter. Neidhardt had already been doing interdisciplinary work and he and his friend Jim brought a wealth of substantial work to the task of exploring the relationship between the knowing process in the natural sciences and in theology. In his review of their 1992 book, *The Knight's Move*, W. Mark Richardson of The Graduate Theological Union, wrote,

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 341.

"In an effort to show the broad influence of Soren Kierkegaard, the authors schematize an epistemological and experiential model they believe is most profoundly expressed in his work. . . . The adventurously large body of material covered—including complementarity in physics, paradox in theology, issues in human developmental psychology, and still other domains—reinforces the comprehensiveness of application of their thesis, which is to show how the knowing process and the nature of human experience instantiate the nature of reality itself. The whole of this reality, they claim, is only fully understood by invoking the Creator God who is relational (trinitarian) in nature."⁶

The reviewer, impressed and marveling at the seminal work done here, confesses that the density of the argument was something of a problem. It may be that in this book, Loder and his colleague began to address the question of community raised in Dykstra's critique of *The Transforming Moment*. Here, in *The Knight's Move*, they argue from and for a relational perspective, drawing on the relational/communal nature of God and giving God's self-relatedness the name of Holy Spirit. In another review, recent Ph.D. student and now a faculty member, Dana Wright, does an admirable work of explaining how Loder and Neidhardt get to their conclusions with the "unexpected knight's move" of observer-involved rationality. Quoting Wright, "Personal transformation is now conceived in terms of divine/human relationality, and the powers of defensive ego adaptation and social processes are negated and transformed." Wright quotes from the book,

"'When transformation is no longer the dynamic pattern of development working as the human spirit *within* the horizon of adaptation and ego formation but, instead, becomes the pattern of *Spiritus Creator*, according to which the ego itself and its horizons are radically transformed, then this same pattern prevails, but now on a far more personal scale of being.' According to the authors, transformation is not only personal but extends to the social sphere in the form of Christian *koinonia*."⁷

Professor Thomas Torrance of the University of Edinburgh also wrote an insightful and appreciative review of *The Knight's Move* as well as of the latest published work of James Loder, titled *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Devel-*

⁶ W. Mark Richardson, review of *The Knight's Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science*, by James E. Loder, *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 16 (1995): 345-7 (here 346).

⁷ Dana R. Wright, review of *The Knight's Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science*, by James E. Loder, *Koinonia* 4 (1992): 273-6 (here, 275).

opment in *Theological Perspective*, published in 1998. (A now last book by Loder is being prepared for publication.) Torrance recognizes and affirms the breadth of inquiry and exploration of the thoughts of many well-admired theorists in several fields that Loder draws upon in his quest for the logic of the Spirit. To quote Torrance, "Loder has provided us with a profound work of penetrating analysis and healing force. . . ." ⁸ Torrance says,

"What strikes me, perhaps above all, is the depth of Loder's compassion, which informs all his analytical therapeutical thought about the relationality between the human spirit and the divine Spirit. No writer or thinker, to my knowledge, has penetrated so deeply, illuminatingly, lovingly, and convincingly into the often tortured tangles of the human spirit, at different stages of its development, and brought to bear upon it the creative and healing presence of the divine that characterizes the logic of the Spirit."⁹

Only a few weeks before his death James Loder met with a former student who had recently completed his doctoral dissertation at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Kenneth Kovacs's dissertation, a tribute and an earnest effort to bring his mentor's work to a larger population, is titled, "The Relational Phenomenological Pneumatology of James E. Loder: Providing New Frameworks for the Christian Life." Kovacs currently serves as pastor of the Catonsville Presbyterian Church in Catonsville, Maryland where he attempts to bring Loder's work into the ordinary life of a congregation, reconceptualizing the way we talk about the Christian life.

James Loder has told "his story" of transformation and insight into the relationship between God and humankind in many places and to many people. His charismatic accounting of the glory of that relationship has captured the minds of some and the hearts of many. Many people, as Jim would attest, have experiences that effect their lives in profound ways, but few go beyond that to try to capture in thought and word what those experiences might mean to others. James Loder was not a social being in the ordinary sense of that word. One could feel that the important routines of institutional life were taking him away from matters of greater importance. His work in the Department of Practical Theology, in the necessary tasks of the doctoral program, and in the decisions required to maintain the degree program in Christian Education was important but not particularly life-giving. Unless he felt things were going in a wrong direction he was content to let others shape

⁸ Thomas F. Torrance, review of *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective*, by James E. Loder, *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 20 (1999): 316-7 (here, 317).

⁹ Ibid.

the outcomes. The glowing center of his life as an academic and as one ordained to Word and Sacrament was the witness to God, revealed in Jesus Christ, and confirmed in human life through the challenging, beneficent Spirit. In the classroom, in private sessions with students, in congregations, and yes, in books that hinted to even the least accomplished reader a passion for abundant life, James Loder was both a beacon and a companion on life's walk. Those who could follow his deep and many-faceted thinking were edified, those who saw in him a man of passion and depth and authenticated belief were drawn to his caring, leading, promising faith that he so earnestly desired for them. Those who worked with him loved him even as they wished they knew him better and yearned for his attention to what appeared to him to be mundane. There are former students across this land and abroad who remember him with great affection and who still attempt to see what he saw and to believe at his depth. James Loder could also have been the subject of a film called *A Beautiful Mind*; he was a beautiful, complex, mysterious, passionate, on occasion, delightful human being and true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Both Princeton Seminary and the Christian community stand in debt to this man of faith and wisdom and look now to those whom he taught and those to whom he witnessed to carry forth the work and ministry that hold promise for all who know the God in three persons who yearns for us to experience convictional knowing, a knowing that frees us for all that God has promised. Thanks be to God that such a man lived and worked among us for so many years and for the legacy he leaves.

Wisdom of the World and God's

by DIOGENES ALLEN

OT Lesson: Proverbs 2:1-6

NT Lesson: I Corinthians 2:1-16

Diogenes Allen, Stuart Professor of Philosophy, is the author of numerous books and articles, most recently Steps Along the Way: A Spiritual Autobiography (2002). He delivered this sermon in Miller Chapel at the opening communion service for the Spring semester on January 28, 2002.

AS YOU KNOW, this is the season of Epiphany when the hidden glory of God in Christ became manifest. The season begins January 6 with the visit of the wise men to the stable in Bethlehem. The wise men were Gentiles, but their wisdom led them to seek for a king, for a great ruler. Since we are in an educational institution beginning a new semester of study, its well for us to reflect on the theme of wisdom, both human, as represented by the wise men, and divine, as present in Jesus, who is the "Wisdom of God." The context of Paul's remarks is a controversy, as usual, in which human wisdom was being used to oppose Christ both within and outside the church. I myself today want to consider ways that they are not opposed, as the church taught in the earliest centuries especially, but in which human wisdom leads to Christ, to the wisdom of God.

Of all those in history who have been called wise, perhaps Socrates among the Gentiles is the most celebrated. Socrates, like Jesus, left no writings, but in each case their followers have left us written records of their lives and their teachings. Perhaps the most striking contrast between these two is in their teachings. Christians have derived many, many doctrines from the teachings of Jesus, so much so that three years of concentrated seminary study is but the beginning of mature knowledge of the many teachings and their significance. In contrast to this, Socrates claimed to know nothing.

Yet in spite of appearances, Christianity is much closer to Socrates, who said that he knew nothing, than it is to any other thinker or subject we study in schools and colleges these days. Now how is that possible, that Christianity with beliefs galore, and Socrates who said that he knew nothing, are very close allies? Let me see if I can explain.

I.

First, we all know enough about ourselves to realize that we need to guide and direct our lives. We are like a ship at sea. We either follow a course, or we simply drift with the flow of the water. Many, many lives simply drift. Our lives need direction, and for Socrates the greatest division, the greatest

distinction between people is between those for whom life is a quest and those for whom it is not—those who seek and those who do not seek. That is the great division. Those who seek believe there is something vital to be found, and Socrates certainly believed that something vital and good is there to be sought after. Some people learn this in childhood. They know it in their hearts; some only later in life; and some, alas, never.

Now Socrates himself, as I said, was a seeker, and he spent his life trying to get other people to become seekers. This is what Socrates means when he says that we must care for our soul, our life. It is to find what is truly good for us. Not any kind of good, but the true good. But where are we to look for that kind of good? Where is there guidance today to find it, to get direction in our journey? Most people get it at supermarket checkout counters from all those magazines. Most college kids get it from the soaps, the most popular form of entertainment. A little more sophisticated, it is common to say "Look to your emotions; look to what satisfies your personal desires and what you are comfortable with." Considerably more sophisticated, David Hume the philosopher wrote, "Reason is, and ought to be, a slave of the passions." We have no choice, if we want to be happy. Our goals are set for us by our emotional makeup. Reason acts only to tell us the best means to reach ends set by our emotions.

But it is animals that are bounded by their instincts. They have to act the way they do. They have little choice. And we too are animals. We are reminded of that all the time these days, but we are not reminded that we also have a great deal of choice. We do not have to accept our emotional endowment and to follow it like a slave. We have considerable control over what we shall be and what we shall do.

Well, if not our emotions, were shall we look? Socrates himself pointed out that as a young man he studied physics, astronomy, biology, in fact he studied every subject he could find, but he was disappointed, because he wanted to know how to live. These subjects did not tell him. They were subjects he respected, but they did not answer the question every human being who lives thoughtfully and freely must face: How to live, how to live well, and properly.

Socrates was a serious person, but he was not somber. In fact, he had an awful lot of fun, and was a person people liked to be with because he was so much fun. And he had a lot of fun in part because he himself did not know the answer to life, but he was seeking. Everyone else around him thought they knew. So he used to ask people questions. He asked a general about courage. After all, a general ought to know about courage. A son about to bury his father about piety. A poet about beauty. A politician about justice. (He should have known better.) I should have saved that because the next

item was to ask a teacher about truth. Then, of course, Socrates would tie them in knots simply by asking them questions and showing them that their answers were self-contradictory. And people got angry, of course. "If you are so smart, then what do you think?" And Socrates would smile and say, "I don't know. That's why the oracle of Delphi said I was the wisest man in Athens. For other people think they know, but don't. I know that I don't know, so I must be the wisest." And then came the stinger: "And the gods have given me the task to make people realize their ignorance; to turn them into seekers, into people who realize that life is a quest and a journey."

And that is one of the reasons Socrates is our ally. His truth is eternal. As it is put in Proverbs and Psalms as we heard a moment ago, "the fear of Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Fear of the Lord means, in part, the center of things is not us, not our world, nor is it to be found by our study of the world. The center is beyond. It is elsewhere. We are intelligent enough to know that we need direction in order to live well and to live truly. We are intelligent enough to learn that what we need cannot be found in any of the subjects we study in our schools and our universities. Whatever purpose they have and however glorious they may be—and they are—they do not tell us the goal or the way to the goal. Exhaust the world, but from it we finally meet only silence on what matters the most. That is the beginning of wisdom. It is to recognize that what we seek is not anything earthly or human, it is to learn that nothing can satisfy our desires, our thirst and hunger for life, to realize that whatever we have it is not enough. We have an infinite appetite, and all around us it is finite. However good, however useful, it is limited. It passes away. But our appetite is unlimited. Socrates got that far, farther than many people in his day, farther than many people today. The beginning of wisdom, then, is to become a seeker. And to be a seeker is to be unusual in a society that is so conformist.

II.

Another way Socrates is an ally is to be found in a lovely scene in the *Symposium*. One of Socrates' friends was the prizewinner of the annual plays that were given in Athens and gave a great party. He invited Socrates to come along. Socrates was rather a scruffy person who did not pay much attention to his appearance, but he got himself cleaned up that day, and on his way to the party, people wondered, "Is Socrates going courting?" He is so well dressed up. On the way, as sometimes happened in Socrates' life, he had what philosophers call a "trance" and religious people call a "mystical experience." His companions just left him there, knowing after a while he would come along with them. And sure enough, after a while, Socrates turned up at the

party where people were already lying down at the table eating. And they were not drunk yet. They were lying because that is the way people did it in those days. The host of the party said, "Oh Socrates, come up here and lie down next to me, but keep your head a bit higher than mine so that your wisdom, which you just got out there, will flow down into my head, and I will be wise like you." Socrates replied to this playful remark, seriously, but in a simply way, "Oh, if only it were that easy to transfer wisdom from one head to another. It would be nice to transfer wisdom the way we can pass food around the table."

With some effort we can transfer information. With wisdom, we have another matter. There is no direct communication of wisdom. It is not a matter of intelligence. Wisdom and intelligence are very different. We can be intelligent and not wise. We can be intelligent and be a fool. But we can be wise, and not overly intelligent—just an average M.Div. student. (This is my last semester.) To tell us a person is intelligent is to tell us nothing about a person's character. Tell us a person is wise, and it tells us a lot about their character. For one thing, it tells us they are not young. Wisdom takes time. You can be very intelligent, and be an infant. You cannot be wise and be young. Why? It takes time. You need time for it to develop. You need to live long enough, make mistakes, and to be able to admit it. That takes courage and some humility. Wisdom has always been a virtue. Intelligence is not a virtue. Notice how we describe people to each other that have not met. "Number one, very cute." Number two, "Very intelligent." You haven't told me a thing about the person.

Christianity cannot be taught directly either—just said by me or anyone else, and just learned by you or anyone else. It is not information. It is wisdom. That takes the experience of trying to live well, and the courage to admit that you go wrong, very wrong. The central teaching of Christianity is that Christ is the way. He calls us to follow him because he knows the way for us to live and to live truly. He knows the direction to follow that enables us to live in and for God, because he is the Wisdom of God. But we cannot recognize that he is the wisdom of God until we have gained some ordinary wisdom for ourselves, the sort that Socrates has. Only then is possible to appreciate the Wisdom of God. Only so is it possible to be open to it and receptive. First we need some human wisdom, such as Socrates had, and to become a seeker. Then perhaps we can receive the Wisdom of God.

Let me illustrate these two steps very simply. First, human wisdom, and then the wisdom of God. All of us need to think well of ourselves, rather desperately. How we look in the eyes of others tells us how to think of ourselves. We seek very hard to look good in the eyes of others. Social

psychologists tell us that the single most powerful motive in a human being is social prestige: how we look in the eyes of others. And so we pursue activities, seek to achieve various things: money, position, on and on and on, seeking somehow to stand over others, so people will take notice of us. And we are and become very anxious, because people do not think enough of us. We have an insatiable desire to be thought well of—a desire to fill the minds of others with ourselves but we cannot bring it off. However much we call attention to ourselves, other people occupy a far smaller place in our minds than we do. Princeton, I submit, is a place full of anxious students, anxious professors, anxious people, struggling to maintain and establish ourselves. Now we can learn that following that route is hopeless. It may take a person a long time to learn this one little bit of wisdom. Some never learn it. It is not difficult to grasp with the intellect. You understood what I said. What is hard is to become what you know. To become wise. To learn such a thing is to become something different, not just to understand it with the mind. It is to become a wise person. And every bit of wisdom we can gather enables us to become something more. We not only become wiser, we become better soil, into which the truth of the Gospel can be sown and take root and grow and yield an abundant harvest. It is true that Christianity has many beliefs and many teachings, because God is infinitely rich. But the beginning of wisdom is the realization that life is a journey, that we must gain some wisdom from life before we become enough of a person to become open to receive the wisdom of God; to see in Christ and in his teachings, his life, his death, his great love for us; to receive the wisdom of God.

Very little wisdom is to be found in schools or college courses, as we pile on the degrees. I leave it to you to judge how much of it is to be found here in this institution. But all too often, we are left to ourselves, to fend for ourselves, in this age. Wisdom is something we have to achieve pretty much on our own. But as you do, the truth of the wisdom of God can become more and more evident to you, and the life he offers can become your own. Christianity ceases to be a theoretical matter to be believed theoretically, to be doubted theoretically, to be taught theoretically. It becomes life-giving food, that nourishes us through and through. For those who do not eat, nourishment is a theoretical matter. For those who eat, nourishment is a reality.

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Help Wanted: Now Hiring!

by CLEOPHUS J. LARUE

Cleophas J. LaRue, the Frances Landey Patton Associate Professor of Homiletics, preached this sermon at the Seminary's Baccalaureate Service in Nassau Presbyterian Church on May 17, 2002.

"Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

(Matt 9:35-38) NRSV

I

I have recited this passage in your hearing today for I am convinced that all too many of us do not believe it. Many of us simply do not believe that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. In fact, to listen to some of us around here, especially during this time of the year, one could get the impression that this passage should be reversed. Instead of reading: the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, it should read the laborers are plentiful, but the harvest is few.

Some of us act as if we believe that we have more workers than we have work. For those of you currently seeking employment I am not minimizing the severity of your plight or speaking in a dismissive manner about the tensions and uncertainties that must surely accompany you through this period of transition. Transitions are always stressful. What I am attempting to do is to reassure you that there is plenty of work to do.

For some yours is an embarrassment of riches. You have had several assignments from which to choose, thus you are not long for this seminary world. Some of you have some inkling of an idea as to where you might be going. The interviews thus far have been promising. Others of you who sit before me today have absolutely no clue what you are going to do or where you are going to go when these next two days of ceremony have come to their rightful end. Wherever you are on that transitory scale, don't worry I have come with good news: there is plenty of work to do.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." What keeps us from embracing this passage in faith? Maybe it is the harvest imagery that we find difficult to grasp given the fact that so many of us live in cities and suburbs

now as opposed to rural areas. Maybe we need a new metaphor to bring home the truth of what the Lord is attempting to convey. Maybe a sports metaphor: This game is winnable, but the really good players are few. Therefore ask the coach to send forth more good players onto the field. Maybe we need a metaphor out of the familiarity of present day urgencies. This burning house is salvageable but the able firefighters are few, therefore ask the captain of the fire station to send forth more firefighters into the burning rubble.

Maybe it is not the datedness of the harvest metaphor, maybe we are having difficulty with what the imagery signifies. Some say the harvest is a frequent symbol for eschatological judgment. Usually when harvest imagery appears in scripture it is a reference to that time when God and God's angels shall gather the elect at the end of the age when time that has been shall be no more. I can understand your not wanting to wrap your minds around that. When I read the judgment angle on this text, even I did not want to come to you on this weekend of send off and celebration talking about the harvest as judgment. I mean what would I say to you? Something on the order of John the Baptist?: Oh, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee the wrath to come? I did not want to say that to you. Not in front of your family and friends.

I do not think in this instance the harvest imagery refers to eschatological judgment. I agree with those who see this passage as missional in its intent. The harvest is a metaphor for mission, and the disciples of Jesus are the harvesters. This is not to dismiss judgment completely from this text, for there is a sense in which the merciful shepherd and the Lord of judgment stand in juxtaposition throughout the whole of Matthew's gospel. But for you on this particular day I think the passage is missional in its intent.

II

Even if it is missional in intent you have to accept in faith what the Scriptures say about the mission. If you can accept this in faith, then irrespective of your particular and/or peculiar circumstances and notwithstanding where the vagaries and vicissitudes of life find you on this day, there is good news for you. The God who called you is now ready to send you forth, for the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. We have been praying for this day. No, not praying that you would find a job, but praying that the Lord of the harvest would send you into the field where you can be most effective and most productive.

Go ahead and fill out your PIFs and seek out every interview that sounds credible. Shake every door and rattle every window. Work like it is all up to

you, but remember to pray like it is all up to God. The sending forth that really matters can only come from God. Help wanted? Yes! Now hiring? Yes! But the help wanted sign is hanging from Zion's window. It is posted on the battlements of heaven. It sways in the breeze from the balcony of the upper deep in glory for God wants there to be no doubt about the origin of the employment.

God is the Lord of the harvest. Not only its owner, but the one who controls its entire management. God has put the harvest and its ingathering into the hands of Jesus. It is his great mission to bring in the harvest and we are to work under his direction and at his command.

There is plenty of work to do and not a whole lot of people to do it. Yes, the time is ripe for the ingathering of souls into the kingdom. It is ripe for the gathering of those seekers after God who are receptive to God's inbreaking activity. It is ripe for the harvesting of all of those in whom the work of God's grace succeeds. In the days following the tragedy of September 11, 2001 a Harlem pastor told me people were knocking on the doors of his church saying, "Please let us in, we want to pray and think about God." The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

III

I have not come before you today with some fancy sermon title intending to play on your fears and anxieties. No, I have come to point you towards God and the great work that is before us. Granted, it does not always happen as you had expected, or come as you had hoped. But there is work to do. A dear colleague on this faculty told me when he graduated from seminary he felt pretty smug and secure for he knew exactly where he was going. He already had his assignment in hand the day he graduated. But it was not to last long, for within a year of going to this ideal assignment they fired him and sent him packing. It threw him into crisis concerning his future ministry.

The work is not always easy, but there is plenty to do. A graduate of this institution wrote to me not long ago to say that after seven years of toiling his church had just begun to show some signs of life. He said when he arrived at the church they barely had two nickels to rub together yet they never missed a payment on any bill. There was one two-year stretch when no one was added to the church. On some Sundays there were only two people in attendance—he and his wife. He said his ministry there had been full of disappointments, discouragements, and some delights, but through it all God had been faithful. Things were finally beginning to look up. The work is not always easy, but there is plenty to do.

There is plenty of work to do but sometimes you have got to go out and start it yourself. I remember speaking one evening to the president of the Presbyterian seminary in northern Brazil. I asked him how the work got started in that country. He said Ashbel Green Simonton, a Princeton student in the 1850s, heard Charles Hodge preach in chapel. He was so moved by what he heard that upon graduation he became a missionary, went to Brazil, and organized the first Presbyterian Church. Today he is known as the father of Presbyterianism in that country. I sometimes worry that contemporary seminarians have this misguided perception that everybody is supposed to start on front street in some tall steeple church. Not so. Go start a work yourself. There is plenty of work to do.

I saw Carl Geores who used to work in our field education department hurrying out of Erdman Hall one evening not long ago. I said, "Where are you going, Carl?" He said, "To a meeting to find pastors to fill Presbyterian pulpits." Dean Foose, our director of senior placement, reported to me that there are more than three thousand Presbyterian churches with a membership of one hundred or less that are without pastors. There is plenty of work to do and not a whole lot of people to do it.

If you do not want to work in an institutional church go start a work yourself. You do not need anyone's permission to go help the poor, or to give yourself in a third world mission, or to be trained in hospice care. Go start a work. Go and do what Jesus did—preach, teach, and heal. Look out upon this world with compassion and care and go do something about it.

IV

I do not speak to you today as one born out of season. Next August I will have been preaching thirty years. I came into the knowledge of my first church one Sunday afternoon while sitting out under a chinaberry tree in my hometown of Corpus Christi, Texas. An elderly preacher named V. B. Friar Sr., brought his car to a screeching halt, and yelled out to me, "There's work to do in Alice, Texas. If you're interested meet me there next Sunday morning." That is how I got my first church.

My salary was \$1200. Not \$1200 a week, not \$1200 a month, but \$1200 a year. I had no parsonage and no pension. I had no travel allowance, no budget, and no staff. The only perk in my package was a free dinner in a different home every Sunday afternoon. I felt pretty good about that until the Sunday I overheard them in the fellowship hall arguing about whose turn it was to take the little preacher home for lunch.

In my first charge I discovered there was not a whole lot in it for me, but there was plenty of work to do. With God's help and my uninitiated heart, I rolled up my sleeves and went to work. I preached the gospel, administered the sacraments, visited the sick, married their young, buried their dead, spoke up for peace, justice, and equality in the community, and tried to live before them in such a way as not to bring shame upon the name of the Lord.

That was then. This is now. Today I stand before you bedecked in the regalia of the academy, awash in the trappings of Baccalaureate Friday, a member of the esteemed faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary. It gives me great pause when I remember that the institution at which I now serve had already been standing fifty years the day Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Its great history and esteemed faculty notwithstanding, I must confess to you that I do not glory in the fact that I work at Princeton, but I glory in the fact that God still has a work for me to do.

Those of you who will hear me today I say to you: the God who has called you is ready to send you forth. Go now. Go at once. Go as you are. Whether your assignment is in your hands or whether you are yet without a clue lift up your heads and lift up your hearts and go forward with the work God has assigned and will assign you to do. Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain. And remember: greater is the one that is in you than the one that is in the world. Help Wanted! Now Hiring! Amen!

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BOOK REVIEWS

Capps, Donald. *Giving Counsel: A Minister's Guidebook*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2001. Pp. 261. \$29.99.

Donald Capps, William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, has accomplished a challenging task, writing a book whose aim is introducing seminary students to counseling. Notice that I did not say "pastoral counseling." Capps intentionally avoids this phrase, preferring instead the more informal phrase "providing counsel," in order to emphasize that clergy provide more counsel than the official sounding phrase "pastoral counseling" implies. Another significant terminological shift is his use of "minister" rather than "pastor," because the term "minister" is more easily seen as encompassing clergy who work in a variety of settings, not only in congregations. Ministers who are not pastoral counseling specialists are encouraged to claim their role as counselors, and the language used makes a difference in this regard.

Giving Counsel: A Minister's Guidebook is for those who are taking their first course in pastoral care and counseling. The author does not try to be all things to all people, but instead limits his scope to the basic aspects of providing counsel. At the same time, he intends for the book to be used alongside other books in an introductory course, which is helpful to professors who are concerned about specific issues in addition to the basics of providing counsel.

The five chapters of this book help students learn how to counsel church members, and others, beginning with a discussion of how to provide a listening environment in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 asks how to construct a conversation. While listening effectively is essential for providing counsel, ministers must do more than listen. They also must respond in meaningful and appropriate ways to those with whom they are having a counseling conversation. In turn, ministers also need to learn to think when providing counsel. Chapter 3 addresses this need to think systemically in the context of counseling conversations, according to principles of family systems theory.

Chapter 4 builds on these three principles. In addition to listening effectively, responding helpfully, and thinking systemically, ministers also must interpret. In one sense, Chapter 4 is a continuation of Chapter 3, but also goes beyond it. Without abandoning systems thinking, Capps gives it a supporting role within the fundamental counseling task of learning to interpret stories the counselee tells. This chapter is must reading for anyone who is concerned about ministers providing counsel, for two reasons. First, it provides an incisive discussion of contemporary criticisms of traditional

family systems theory. These criticisms focus especially on the neglect of the self in the family system, a neglect of the stories that individuals tell in family therapy. Second, drawing on this critical dialogue among contemporary family therapists, Capps develops a model for interpreting the stories of counselees that respects both the self and the system.

Capps concludes his book with an important discussion of boundaries. If ministers can listen, respond, think, and interpret, they also must manage boundaries when providing counsel. One boundary management issue involves determining the number of counseling sessions that will be appropriate within the context of congregational ministry, or in other ministry settings. Capps supports the contemporary brief counseling view that more is not necessarily better. He argues that managing the number of sessions fits pastoral ministry better than a long-term counseling view, since it provides ministers with the opportunity to utilize and develop their counseling skills as an alternative to making automatic referrals.

The second boundary management issue that Capps discusses involves sexual misconduct. In the past, this issue may have been seen as too advanced for the introductory level of learning to provide counsel. Today, however, no minister should practice counseling with church members, or with anyone else, without awareness of this important ethical issue.

Giving Counsel: A Minister's Guidebook is conversational, engaging, and accessible. I have no hesitation enthusiastically recommending it to beginning students. Advanced students and experienced ministers may find it useful as a reminder of good practise.

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Dean, Kenda Creasy and Ron Foster. *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*. Nashville: Upper Room, 1998. Pp. 220. \$14.95.

If I were to recommend one youth ministry resource to put in the hands of pastors and youth ministry leaders, it would be *The Godbearing Life*. Kenda Creasy Dean, a United Methodist pastor and Assistant Professor of Youth, Church, and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary, and Ron Foster, also a UM pastor and frequent instructor (as is Dean) at the PTS Youth Ministry Forums, have gifted us with an image of youth ministry (and all ministry, for that matter) as "bearing God" to one another. Drawing from the story of Mary, a teenage girl whose "yes" to God made her the initial Godbearer, the authors place incarnational ministry and sanctifying grace at

the center of youth ministry. They see young people and their leaders as called, blessed, and transformed by the Holy Spirit, who "enters us, dwells among us and makes it possible for Christ to enter the world through us." Borrowing the image of "holy ground" from another Godbearer, Moses, they suggest expanding the turf where youth ministry occurs. Holy ground is any "context in which faith catches fire."

The authors challenge two prevailing models of youth ministry: (1) the piper piper model—what we need is an attractive, young, preferably male, youth pastor who will draw youth to our church; and (2) the entertainment model—what we need is slick, winning programs and spectacular mega-events. Both models measure success in terms of numbers of youth attending. Dean and Foster indict churches that buy into such shallow approaches, for to do so exposes an underlying belief that youth could care less about the church, Bible study, or even God. Quite the contrary, say the authors: "Youth look to the church to show them something, Someone, capable of turning their lives inside out and the world upside down. Most of the time we have offered them pizza."

Instead of offering new programs, resources, or ideas for Sunday night, Dean and Foster "rechart a course for youth ministry," a course which takes young people seriously and expects more from those who minister with them. This recharted course is precisely why this book is so valuable. Generational research has shown that the so-called Millennials, this present generation of youth, are searching for meaning, seeking God, desiring to make a difference in their world, and—hear this, local churches—are attracted to adults who can talk coherently with them about God, and who will journey with them as they seek God's will for their lives. Leaders are to be "Godbearers," not "gungho program leaders."

What is fascinating about this book is Foster and Dean's use of language. There is nothing mundane or "same old, same old" here. To depict a Godbearing life Dean and Foster devote the second half of the book to the development of faith practices. But they do so with fresh images. Using a dinner table and the activities accompanying a family meal as metaphor, they describe a "curriculum of Christian practices": bread breaking (practices of communion), pain taking (practices of compassion), wave making (practices of teaching and nurture), rhythm breaking (practices of dehabituating), and praise making (practices of worship). Additional images describe the role of adult leaders, pastors, mentors, parents, and of young people themselves: hand-holder (ministry of presence), finger-pointer (ministry of direction), and my favorite, midwife, for which the authors describe four "catechetical stages of labor." Stage three, "breaking water," refers to prodding the limi-

tations of one's faith and "making openings that give faith more breathing room." Faith is birthed, not coerced.

For those who are pessimistic about young people and their relationship to the church, spend some time with *The Godbearing Life*. There is good news here: "Youth ministry is a womb, an incubation ward for potential God-bearers as they ponder and struggle with the news that God is crazy in love with them, would die for them and, in fact, has." "God has the utmost confidence in young people's ability to change the world, not to mention the church, and not only invites them but expects them to do so."

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McKee, Elsie Anne, ed. and trans. *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*. New York: Paulist, 2001. Pp. 360. \$26.95.

Old-time caricatures of John Calvin as the highly authoritarian, rigidly "logical," virtual dictator of Geneva have been crumbling. Recent studies of Calvin coupled with greater availability of his writings in English bring a clearer picture. This volume will go a long way to further the collapse of these erroneous images. Princeton's Elsie McKee has provided a first rate selection of translations—some old, some her own—that focus on the pastoral piety of Calvin. They steadily portray his spirituality, faith, and piety as he labored tirelessly in his ministries in the church to nurture the Christian lives of those under his care.

The Calvin presented here is a servant of God who as a spiritual leader in the church carried out a full-orbed ministry. A great value of the picture of Calvin that emerges from these judicious selections of his writings is to see the range of concerns and activities that reflect the breadth of what Calvin understood the Christian life in the church to include. "Piety" (Lat. *pietas*; Calvin's word for the traditional medieval term *spiritualitas* [spirituality]) is biblically-based for Calvin and is corporately focused and expressed. Calvin's pastoral piety was "intensely personal but never individualistic." It springs from theological understanding as well as personal experience of God and is nourished by the great doctrines of the faith. It embraces Scripture study, prayer, worship, proclamation, sacraments, and solidarity with those oppressed. This is "not an easy or comfortable piety; it asks for one's all. Sturdy and down to earth, lived in the mundane context of daily work, yet always conscious of the presence of the transcendent God and the high calling of living before God. An energizing, lifelong response to God's liberating claim, God's righteous mercy, God's compelling love, a belonging that is all our joy. 'We are not our own . . . We are God's!'"

McKee valuably introduces Calvin's pastoral piety and then turns to selections that provide "an autobiographical introduction to John Calvin." She includes in this section a moving letter about his wife's death (1549) to his friend Farel in which Calvin writes: "I do what I can to keep myself from being overwhelmed with grief." McKee also includes Calvin's "Preface" to his commentary on the Psalms (1557) in which he comments that "God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought to a teachable frame my mind . . ." The origins of Calvin's faith and experience are with God. Part Two of this book, Theological Orientation, selects three key themes from Calvin's *Institutes*: Piety, Faith, and the Church. These themes set the trajectories for Part Three, Liturgical and Sacramental Practices, Part Four, Prayer, and Part Five, Piety in the Christian Life, Ethics, and Pastoral Care.

Since corporate worship played a central role in Calvin's piety, McKee includes selections from Calvin on the Psalter (which functioned as the congregation's liturgical book), the Sunday worship experience, as well as selections relating to weekday worship and Calvin's Passion Week sermons. Here we encounter the nourishing structures of worship and praise that sustained Geneva's common people, many of whom were exiles and in great need. A key aspect of corporate as well as private worship is prayer. Part Four features a variety of Calvin's prayers as well as his teachings on prayer. Calvin's "occasional prayers" include a "prayer to say before studying his lesson at school" and a "prayer to say before the meal" as well as "thanksgiving after the meal."

Piety takes outward expression in the Christian life in the ways others are treated and in the care given by pastors and believers to each other in the midst of sickness, death, and affliction. "Calvin's piety can be characterized as intensely activist, a devotion to God lived out in the practical present daily world." These selections richly convey the truth of this observation as readers "enter into" the community life of Genevan Christians.

This treasury of Calvin's writings is enhanced by McKee's helpful observations that introduce each section and its themes. One hopes this volume will be widely read in seminaries and in churches. McKee reminds us through Calvin that ours is not a vacuous "spirituality," so common today. And she instructs us in a vital Christian faith where piety is "that reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of God's benefits induces" (*Institutes* 1.2.1).

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McKee, Elsie Ann. *Katharina Schütz Zell. Volume One: The Life and Thought of a Sixteenth-Century Reformer; Volume Two: The Writings. A Critical Edition.* Leiden: Brill, 1999. Pp. 506. \$206.00.

The search by several Strasbourg scholars for a historian to undertake the long-overdue biography of one of the most prominent women of the sixteenth-century Reformation was happily concluded a decade ago when Professor Elsie McKee consented to make the study of Katharina Schütz Zell her prime research objective. McKee is, of course, well grounded in the continental Reforms in their larger scope, and in specialized themes on which she has published an impressive number of books, articles, and lectures covering not only theological issues but social and institutional matters as well. The outcome of her study of Schütz Zell is the work here under review. Happily, its publication coincided with Schütz Zell's five-hundredth birthday (1498). It is meticulously researched, gracefully written and undoubtedly a definitive work. McKee's symbiosis, empathy, and critical sense provide a much needed foundation for understanding this woman of several centuries past. Yet it is far more than biography. Volume one is divided into two parts, "biography" and "theology." The division, however, is formal; the two elements are carefully integrated and mutually informing. The material basis for the interpretation offered in volume one is then provided in the second volume entitled "The Writings"—a critical edition of all the known works of Schütz Zell.

For many students of church history, Katharina Schütz has been little more than a name. A well-educated, pious Catholic in a profoundly Christian home, Schütz became an integral part of Reformation history through her correspondence, travel, and deep personal experience. Although without the benefit of training in Latin, she nevertheless corresponded with various Reformers, from Luther to Schwenkfeld. Her marriage in 1524 to the important preacher and pastor, Matthew Zell, indelibly linked her to Strasbourg's Reformation, where her husband served at the Cathedral after Strasbourg had turned Protestant. Through the use of never before published letters, presented in the second volume of this work, McKee opens up deeply private and penetrating insights Schütz Zell offers not only into the Reformation but also into a sixteenth-century clerical marriage.

The interests of both Zells included basic Reformation principles such as the role of faith in justification, the sole authority of Scripture, the rejection of the Mass and emergency baptism. But they also had little use for what they regarded as theological hair-splitting, e.g., on question of the presence of Christ in the Supper. As a consequence, they were prepared to take the

distinction between essential and nonessential doctrines further than most of their contemporaries and to play host to people with a wider range of theological opinions than were most of their colleagues. This large-heartedness exposed Katharina, in the years after the death of her husband, to the charge of having been a Schwenkfelder. In her defense, she insisted that Matthew had been as friendly to Schwenkfeld as she—though she immediately added that friendship did not mean agreement. She also pointed out that her chief detractor, the Lutheran Ludwig Rabus, a one-time assistant to Matthew Zell, had lived with the Zells for a time during the 1540s. Having been born in 1524, Rabus knew little of the beginnings of the Reformation in Strasbourg, and thus failed to realize that the liturgy and practices which he sought to have changed had the full support of Matthew Zell himself and could not be altered without bringing dishonor to Zell's memory.

Schütz Zell treated her own life as a source of theology. She moved from biblical writings to self-understanding with great ease. She knew affliction and through such experiences believed she had learned how to help others in similar circumstances. She wrote an exposition of the Lord's Prayer for children around the time of the deaths of her own two babies. She wrote psalms after Matthew died, several of which she selected to go into a book of consolation for an elderly friend suffering from leprosy. Through such writings, along with her letters, notes, and conversations with her husband, Schütz Zell actively participated in the Strasbourg Reformation. Her husband was in fact responsible for circulating some of her writings. McKee goes to great lengths to argue that Katharina was herself a Reformer of the church, agreeing in this judgment not only with the historian Marc Lienhard but with Katharina, who called herself a "church mother." In sum, Katharina Schütz Zell was a remarkable representative of the "original" Reformation which she ascribed to the generation of Bucer, as well as Luther and his associates. Her life and actions are a microcosm of the Reformation—which makes this study of her life so richly rewarding.

McKee has produced an excellent biography, one that may be read even without attention to the critical apparatus. Yet it also poses a special problem of identification with the subject. McKee has developed a closeness to her subject matter that could result in special pleading. She feels confident in attributing certain biographical details in her own words and explanations that are not literally the words of Zell herself. See, e.g., in McKee's *Introduction*, "It is a pleasure to present my demanding and delightful friend to a wider audience of her old and new acquaintances." This closeness is also apparent in her reflections upon Zell's experience as a nine-year-old standing in church, unable to see the altar, yet hearing the words of the preacher,

Geiler von Kaysersberg. "Coming to Mass, the child watched as well as she could, trying to see around the taller adults." "Sometimes Katharina must have found it difficult to stand still and not fidget." McKee herself appreciates the risk she has taken by peering so close to events like these. She writes, "Anything which does not have *explicit* basis in the sources but expresses a reasonable extrapolation from her known attitudes and other evidences is marked by the language of judgment: probably, certainly, possibly, no doubt, etc."

McKee has written one of the essential biographies of the sixteenth century. It is must reading for all students of the Reformation in particular and it makes an important contribution to women's studies.

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Metzger, Bruce M. *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. Pp. 200. \$14.99.

Few, if any, other New Testament scholars have the experience and knowledge needed to write a book like this with the authority, insight, and fairness that Bruce Metzger brings to the task. The George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature Emeritus at Princeton Seminary, Dr. Metzger was a beloved teacher and mentor to many who read this Bulletin. With the publication of this book, we are in his debt once again.

The book is divided into two parts, "Ancient Versions" and "English Versions," as indicated by the subtitle. The first part contains two chapters, one devoted to ancient versions of the Old Testament made for Jews (the Septuagint and the interpretive Targums), and a second dedicated to ancient versions intended primarily for Christians. In this chapter we find authoritative descriptions of the known versions of the first Christian millennium (some of which cannot be dated with precision): Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Gothic, Ethiopic, Arabic, and so on. The book's second part, which will likely be of more interest to pastors and lay people, contains a fascinating history of the translation of the Bible into English. The fourteen chapters of varying lengths begin with the ten or so English versions before the 1611 King James Bible. Metzger then discusses the KJV and some of the "private versions" prepared between it and the British (1881-85) and American (1901) revisions of the KJV. He then treats the many English renditions of the twentieth century. In these last chapters we become familiar not only with the versions most familiar to us (RSV, NRSV, NIV), but also with Jewish translations,

“simplified, easy-to-read versions” (J.B. Phillips, Good News Bible, Contemporary English Version, etc.), and paraphrases (Kenneth Taylor’s *Living Bible*, Eugene Peterson’s *Message*, etc.). As one might expect from the chair of the NRSV translation committee, the NRSV receives careful attention, including a series of nine charts illustrating its differences from the RSV.

Perhaps the most appealing feature of this book is Dr. Metzger’s ability to select essential but also truly interesting aspects of each translation: the story behind its production; the qualifications and goals of the translators; its distinctive features (including strengths and weaknesses); and its usefulness to readers. The politics of Bible translation are not ignored in these stories. Readers learn, for example, that one of the reasons King James supported a new English translation was his dislike of the Calvinist politics expressed in the marginal notes of the English version of the Geneva Bible. We are reminded that some RSV translators were accused of being Communists. And we learn a bit about the “brouhaha” surrounding the first attempts to revise the NIV with gender-inclusive language.

Though fair in his assessments, Dr. Metzger is not afraid to point out inconsistencies, errors, anachronisms, and other infelicities of the versions he examines. He draws special attention, with examples, to some of the problems in the paraphrases so popular in churches today. This clearly written, enjoyable book belongs on the shelves of all lay people, pastors, and even scholars who want an expert overview of Bible translation from its beginnings in Greek, Syriac, and Latin to its many manifestations in the modern English-speaking world.

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Taylor, Mark Lewis. *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001. Pp. 208. \$16.00.

Mark Lewis Taylor, Professor of Theology and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary, offers an innovative and constructive theology with his interdisciplinary and compassionate text, *The Executed God*. Neither an abstract treatise on God and Jesus Christ nor a “how-to” manual on social revolution, *The Executed God* reworks the doctrines of theology and Christology while encouraging us to see that faith matters for social transformation. Taylor focuses on the metaphor of the executed God in relation to the prison and law enforcement systems to convince us that following the way of the cross leads us into adversarial politics against elite sectors of American society. At the book’s

end, he summons Christians and other persons concerned about justice to help dismantle the police apparatus, to terminate an addiction to imprisoning U.S. citizens, and to abolish the death penalty. To have faith is to change the world fundamentally.

Key to Taylor's argument is his radical reconstruction of the notions of Jesus and God. Jesus, Taylor claims, was killed by state-sanctioned forces because he directly opposed and politically resisted an elite-police-religious-imperial hierarchy of his day. An impious Galilean with an anti-empire posture, Jesus suffered from arrest, incarceration, torture, and execution by way of capital punishment. In contrast to ideas that Jesus is merely a private personal lord and savior of individualism, or a nice liberal, reformist human being, or a zealot of violent conflagration, or a semi-magic wand that grants prosperity and personal material accumulation, or a metaphysical Logos, Taylor, from scriptural exegesis, depicts a more authentic portrayal of Jesus—the One who dissented against the powers and, thereby, struggled for and with the alienated and underclasses in political movements. To side with these voiceless, majority sectors of society, Jesus pursued the way of the cross in three interrelated movements.

First of all, Jesus was nurtured in Galilee, a region known for protest and contestation by economically deprived and politically subordinated common folk against the imperial control of a single superpower. Thus the first mark of the way of the cross entails *adversarial politics* against structures of oppression. Next, this way produces creative *dramatic action* that bodily confronts state initiated terror and creates ripples of hope among diverse people. Third, the way of the cross culminates in *building peoples' movements*. Jesus focused on restoring human relationships prior to suffering capital punishment and, after his execution, his spirit energized ongoing adversarial movements throughout the land. And for Christians and other progressive citizens, Taylor commends this way as our vocation as well.

Taylor also reconfigures the doctrine of God. God becomes that power which is greater than all the executing forces on earth and especially the new predatory, global *Pax Americana*. God the greater power is God the deeper and wider force—deep in the sense that it exists in nature and the universe, and wide in the sense that it resides in the complex plethora of peoples' movements of resistance. In fact, greater, deeper, and wider are theological marks and spiritual substance of the way of the cross; a dynamic in which Jesus participated but a process that also surpasses any one person's life, including the man from Galilee.

In *The Executed God*, Taylor seeks to go beyond what he considers the usual, dull, and speculative fare of systematic discourse fixated on ideas for

their own sake. For Taylor, systematic theology becomes an exciting and live option when it arises from life and death encounters of poor and working people forced against the brutalities of life by the prison-industrial complex of the remaining sole superpower, the United States. Consequently, part one of *The Executed God* focuses on the theatrics of terror inherent in lockdown America. Over two million U.S. citizens are serving jail time and an additional three million are caught up in the legal system. The construction and financing of penal institutions is one of the largest billion-dollar industries to date. Black and brown Americans disproportionately dwell in these facilities, and people of color, men and women, represent the majority on death row. In Pennsylvania, for instance, sixty percent of those scheduled for execution are African American. Moreover, Taylor documents how capital punishment is overwhelmingly an art form for punishing the poor. The way of the cross, which became a lifestyle of Jesus, and the executed God emerge out of the exigencies and messiness of injustice and resistance. Theological doctrines for the church bring the people of faith back to the biblical witness of the Jewish Jesus who returned to Galilee after suffering capital punishment on Good Friday. And, for Taylor, we observe and participate in that ongoing resurrected divinity of the executed God when Christians and others commit ourselves now to the struggle for a humane and socially-restructured United States.

The Executed God will bring novel and scholarly insights to theological classes. It is also written for pastors and church discussion groups. It bridges conversations between Christians and others interested in justice issues, particularly the hotly-contested debates over crime. And Taylor's self-revelations of his active involvement to free Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row offer all of us an answer to the perennial question: What must we do to be saved?

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Foose, Dean E. *Searching for a Pastor the Presbyterian Way: A Roadmap for Pastor Nominating Committees*. Louisville: Geneva, 2000. Pp. 80. \$9.95.

It is standard American fare to insist that there is nothing so practical as a good idea. But it is also true that ideas are plentiful and fairly cheap. Ideas that work well in congregations are often harder to come by, especially when it comes to selecting a new pastor. This book, which is full of good and practical ideas for calling a pastor, was written by a wise and seasoned

clergyperson and congregational consultant who can help congregations navigate their way through the choppy waters of calling a new and appropriate pastor. As its title implies, Foose's work is focused on Presbyterian responsibilities and processes but other Protestant congregations can profit from his wisdom.

Foosé employs the metaphor of "roadmap" to carry the basic intent of his book. It is a useful symbol, for the book clearly charts the procedures a congregation (or its nominating committee) needs to follow to be successful. From the Preface to the Appendices, Foosé seeks to help Pastor Nomination Committees (known as PNC's in Presbyterian circles) select and call a new pastor whose gifts, skills, and expectations are *appropriate* for that *particular* congregation. Especially insightful is the pithy first chapter on Presbyterian pastoral leadership in our own day. This chapter summarizes some of the most practical and wisest scholarly studies concerning competent and trust-building pastoring in these postmodern environments. The counsel offered here ought to be invaluable for search committees who need to identify up front *what kind of pastor* they are seeking. It is worth noting that Foosé places far more emphasis on *who* the candidate is rather than particular professional gifts (say like preaching and leading) that the candidate demonstrates. Between the lines Foosé cautions search committees that preaching is not the only pastoral gift to look for or to explore.

Successive chapters track the pastor-seeking journey from start to home port. Foosé lays out the many agenda items for a committee's trip: the need to communicate clearly and to appreciate one another's views; the need to retain open access to denominational agencies or other organizational structures to keep the journey moving forward; and the constant attention to a congregation's culture, ethos, and needs. Chapter Five elaborates how Presbyterians might fish for a candidate in the swirling waters of denominational résumés or PIF's, random nominees, and multiple references. Instructions about how to conduct successful interviews (Chapter Six) are especially helpful, though one might wish that Foosé would recommend ways for search committees to inquire about the candidate beyond and outside conventional interviews. Will the best decision be arrived at if a committee *only* talks to the candidate, even when that conversation is face to face? Sometimes a different lure and tactic is necessary to hook the wryly lunger lying low in deep pools. If past behaviors are the best indicators of future performance, how might a committee devise interviewing techniques that go beyond just talking over lunch and listening to sermon tapes?

In the opinion of this reviewer, one small but critical procedure remains underdeveloped. It would be especially helpful if Foosé would map out some

clear and effective line of communication between the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and the Session (Elders), the ruling officers of a Presbyterian congregation. For solid and historic reasons, a PNC is responsible *only* to the congregation and its will. However, for all practical purposes, the new pastor must work closely and effectively with the Session long after the PNC is dismissed. Foose addresses this challenge in a brief paragraph but this reviewer thinks that something more is urgently needed. What all Presbyterian PNCs would surely want to avoid is nominating a new pastor who is not “in synch” with the congregation’s “ruling elders.”

This is one of those books whose time has come. It is a wonderful gift to Presbyterians and all other congregations who long to call a grace-filled pastor who leads, teaches, and befriends.

John W. Stewart
Princeton Theological Seminary

Holmgren, Fredrick C. *The Old Testament and the Significance of Jesus: Embracing Change—Maintaining Christian Identity: The Emerging Center in Biblical Scholarship*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. Pp. 204. \$16.00.

The Old Testament has been, of late, the object of renewed theological interest and interpretation as several recent works have sought to re-envision how Christians understand the Old Testament as Scripture. Two significant and sometimes overlapping motivations generate this flurry of interpretive activity. The first is the growing sense within the church and among scholars for the church that the theological depth of the Old Testament is largely untapped by congregations today. Ellen F. Davis, for example, has recently made a significant contribution to this question in her book, *Getting Involved with God*. The second motivation, related in many respects to the first, concerns the way that Christian interpretation of the Old Testament has funded anti-Semitism over the centuries and continues to be a stumbling block to Jewish-Christian dialogue. The appearance in late 2001 of an official Roman Catholic document that validates the Jewish waiting for the messiah by appeal to the witness of the Old Testament attests to this concern among Catholic Christians. Among Protestants this concern comes to the fore, as well. Kendall Soulen’s *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, provides a major theological addition to this essential topic. Now, Fredrick Holmgren has added a distinctive contribution as an esteemed Protestant scholar of the Old Testament.

Holmgren is especially attuned and sensitive to the theological issues that surface in Jewish-Christian dialogue, yet he is concerned not to diminish central Christian claims—a delicate balancing act. Employing the idea of

"creative/depth" exegesis, he shows how the New Testament writers interpreted the Old Testament in order to make sense of their experience of Jesus Christ. Theirs was not a promise/fulfillment schema, nor a "plain" reading of the text, but a means of reading their sacred Scripture in the light of their present experience. But because depth exegesis is believers' exegesis, it is not only characteristic of the New Testament writers' hermeneutic, but can also usefully describe the interpretive approach to Scripture at Qumran, and the approaches by the later rabbis. The implications for Jewish-Christian dialogue are significant: if the movement is from experience of Christ back to the Old Testament, then Jews can hardly be blamed for failing to "see" Jesus in the Old Testament.

As a teacher I find Holmgren's discussion of the Old Testament's denunciations of Israel in the first chapter to be especially germane and helpful. He rightly perceives these criticisms not as rejections of Israel, but as evidence of Israel's "ability to practice and endure self-criticism" and as reflecting "a remarkable spiritual maturity." This counters the dangerous, yet astoundingly widespread, notion that Israel is particularly and unusually evil and the theological corollary that the sins portrayed are their sins alone, and not ours. Other chapters deal with the "fulfillment" language in the New Testament, the role of the Sinai covenant, and the language of the "new covenant" in Jeremiah 31:31-34. In his discussion of the latter, Holmgren wants to deflate the tension arising between Old Testament texts that stress human over against divine initiative in human transformation, and vice versa. The aim of flattening out this distinction is to counter the traditional interpretation of the "new covenant" in Jeremiah as the result of unilateral divine activity (Holmgren emphasizes the continuity of this covenant with what has gone before). Yet, in my view, this tension is not easy to collapse, nor should we be in a hurry to do so. As with some other apparent inconsistencies, the texts cited (e.g., Deut 10:16; 30:6; Ezek 11:19; 36:26; 18:30-31) reveal a point of tension within Israelite thought that has considerable potential for creative theological reflection, and should not be too quickly explained away.

Other chapters cover some of the distinctive theological contributions of the Old Testament (a somewhat tepid presentation, in my view), the question of the names for the two testaments, and interestingly, a discussion of the way Jesus is taken up in the creeds of the early church. Holmgren offers very good bibliographic guidance via footnotes to more extended discussions, and his style is clear and the tone irenic. Despite a tendency to harmonize genuine differences (of textual meaning, or sometimes of exegetical method), this is a helpful book in the necessary and on-going task of moving past the denigra-

tions of the past into a better understanding of the enigmatic relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

Jacqueline E. Lapsley
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Noll, Mark, ed. *The Princeton Theology 1812–1921: Scripture, Science and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Warfield*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. Pp. 352. \$26.99.

There is little doubt that Mark Noll is emerging as a front-rank historian of American Protestantism. As the McManis Professor of Christian Thought at Wheaton College, he may be without peer when he focuses his enormous energies and facile pen on America's evangelical tradition. His scholarly work is well known here and abroad for its balance, depth, and passion. Noll especially excels in interpreting this particular genre of Protestantism that often gets short shrift in the guild and is often toxic to academic theologians. Writing in the tradition of American historians like Timothy Smith and Sydney Ahlstrom, Noll continues to remind contemporary scholars of the breadth and complexity of America's evangelical past.

In keeping with this larger horizon, Noll and his publisher decided to reprint his earlier anthology, entitled *The Princeton Theology, 1812–1921*. In his masterful introductory essay, Noll acknowledges that these Princeton theologians "practiced ways of thought and advocated theological positions that are greatly out of fashion in the twentieth century." Yet Noll knows that these nineteenth-century stalwarts have yet to receive a dispassionate, fulsome appraisal by historians of American thought. As a way to engage and correct that oversight, Noll provides here a perceptive (and slightly revised) introduction to the lives and thoughts of the theologians who, collectively, taught at Princeton Theological Seminary for over a century. Appended to this work is the finest bibliography published to date about these same Old School Presbyterian theologians and churchmen. A scholar who wants to understand the many facets of nineteenth-century American Protestantism cannot bypass these two contributions. By themselves, they are worth the price of the book.

As Noll's bibliography attests, the Princeton Theologians were prolific writers. Noll once quipped that he wondered if they ever had a thought they did not write down. Because their surplus of writings makes the selection for a manageable anthology particularly challenging, Noll has decided to sift his many options through the sieve of "Scripture, Science and Theological Method." Beginning with the Seminary's first professor, Archibald Alex-

ander, continuing with Charles Hodge and his son A. A. Hodge, and ending with selections from Benjamin B. Warfield, Noll selects writings that revolved around the nineteenth-century issues of theological method at Princeton Seminary. He is especially intent on demonstrating how these Princetonnians' doctrine of Scripture was wedded to common sense realism, and, in turn, how they appropriated nineteenth-century science to undergird their apologetic agenda. According to Noll, only when these three strands are woven together can the modern scholar begin to discern the warp and woof of this Old School hermeneutic. A revealing phrase by Warfield put it this way: "The character of our religion [piety?] is, in a word, determined by the character of our theology."

This economized selection from the very large corpus of these theologians' work is both the strength and the limitation of this re-issued edition. On the one hand, Noll's selections reveal the rigor and consistency of the "Princeton method" and the story of its endurance well into the twentieth century. From earliest articulation of a "Princeton Theology" in the Seminary's first professor, Archibald Alexander through the quintessential statement in Charles Hodge's *Systematic Theology* and finally into the more confining agenda of B. B. Warfield, Noll's choices demonstrate the philosophical cohesion and theological congruities of this distinctly American evangelical tradition. On the other hand, they are less helpful to reveal how their hermeneutical assumptions extended into their robust encounter with the social, political, and scientific challenges of their day.

These same samples lay bare what unnerved and alienated these informed Reformed thinkers. These excerpts point to a century-long antipathy to all things Kantian. Since they were diametrically opposed to Kant's quest for liberation from the centuries of "self-incurred tutelage" and his "religion within the bounds of reason," many historians have determined they were out of touch with the "modern impulses" of their day. Likewise, they were unconvinced by the way Schleiermacher interpreted and promulgated the Reformed tradition. Noll acknowledges here, as he does elsewhere, that these excerpts unveil the most serious methodological dilemma of the old Princeton Theology, namely, their reluctance, if not inability, to account for intellectual tours-de-force of the nineteenth century, that is, historical development in the Biblical texts and the evolutionary processes in nature and humans.

These excerpts, however, might possibly carry an implication that Noll probably does not want to convey. The Princeton Theologians were, in Martin Marty's phrase, "public theologians." By this phrase historians mean

that these theologians were significantly engaged in public arenas of American life, science, and culture. In fact very few issues in American nineteenth-century society and politics escaped their comment and appraisal, especially in their influential journal the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*. Noll's selections, especially those lifted from their journal, are less helpful in demonstrating how these theologians ferried back and forth between the Bible, the Reformed tradition, and the myriad of issues in antebellum society and the Gilded Age in America. A more fulsome exposition of this Old School hermeneutic requires, in the opinion of this appreciative reviewer, the inclusion of excerpts that demonstrate how their method extended to their many publics. Our understanding of their hermeneutic is eclipsed and short-suited if we are deprived of seeing how their assumptions and methods infiltrated issues other than intramural theological ones. I am sure that Noll does not want to suggest that their hermeneutical methods were somehow merely esoteric and centripetal.

The distinguished historian, Henry F. May, once said that the Presbyterian theologians in Princeton were the best of the "Didactic Enlightenment." He meant that among the several expressions of the Enlightenment in America, Princeton theologians constructed a sober coalescence of biblical authority, "doxological" science, a vigorous intellectual tradition, and a common sense employment of human reasoning. There is no better place to begin one's serious appraisal of these Princeton Theologians than this indispensable anthology that Professor Noll has assembled. American scholars will be appreciative that this anthology has been given a longer life.

John W. Stewart
Princeton Theological Seminary

Pazmino, Robert W. *God Our Teacher: Theological Basics in Christian Education*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. Pp. 202. \$17.99.

Robert Pazmino, Valeria Stone Professor of Christian Education at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, has established himself in recent years as one of the most creative and prolific evangelical Christian education theorists in the United States. *God Our Teacher* makes another solid contribution to his overall practical theological project. This project seeks to systematically interrelate the basics themes and values that shape an evangelical and ecumenical understanding of Christian teaching such that both the mystery of God's plenitude and the postmodern cultural context are

honored and addressed. With *God Our Teacher* Pazmino wants to utilize the church's doctrine of the Trinity to generate insights concerning the teaching ministry of Christian congregations. He orients his rich discussion around six interrelated themes that describe divine action humanward. These themes taken together, elaborate the nature of the relationality that exists between God and humanity, and illuminate educational implications of God being *for us*, *despite us*, *with us*, *in us*, *through us*, and *beyond us*. For Pazmino, the doctrine of the Trinity offers the clue to how Christian education practice (*ortho-praxis*) might be rightly understood (*ortho-doxis*) and fleshed out as a complex spirituality of gratitude, humility, gentleness, cooperation, open-mindedness, hopefulness, etc. (*ortho-pathos*). As usual, Pazmino demonstrates sensitivity to the church's need to attend to the voices of the marginalized, an emphasis that shines through on every page of this book.

God for us (Chapter One) argues that Christian education serve the determination for inclusivity intrinsic to God's care-giving initiative towards humanity, revealed in the Gospel, such that both human diversity and the unity essential to human thriving are preserved and enhanced according to the nature of trinitarian relations. *God despite us* (Chapter Two) calls Christian educators to take seriously the power of sin's resistance to God's gracious movement humanward. Teaching ministries require the articulation and practice of a complex "grammar" which accounts for human sinfulness at every point, based upon an *ordo salutis* that connects salvation to education. *God with us* (Chapter Three) places Jesus Christ at the center of the church's teaching ministry, showing how the incarnation reveals the standards (content, context, and participants), the order (*ordo amoris*), and the organizing principles (conversion, connection, and care-giving) of Christ-centered pedagogy. Here Pazmino calls Christian educators (1) to recognize both the continuity and discontinuity of tradition, (2) to champion the priority of persons, especially the poor, for Christian education practice, (3) to be aware of the potential idolatry of all educational paradigms, and (4) to appreciate the relation of mentoring to discipling.

God in us (Chapter Four) emphasizes the ministry of the Holy Spirit in education and the spiritual nature of teaching. Pazmino argues that the Holy Spirit is the "determinative environmental presence" of Christian life and the educational ministry's essential task is "to create those conditions where the Spirit of God can work most fruitfully in the lives of persons [and communities]." He describes the "marks" of the Spirit in preparative, instructional, and evaluative moments of the teaching task. *God through us* (Chapter Five) addresses Pazmino's concern for teaching in the service of "the common

good." He understands teaching as "the connective membrane" of congregational ministry which links identity-forming processes (inreach) and missional-witnessing processes (outreach) in the service of one comprehensive extension of Christ's rule in the world. Finally, *God beyond us* (Chapter Six) addresses the theme of eschatology in Christian education and the teacher as sentinel. Pazmino searches for a balanced approach to educational practices which (1) takes seriously the interdependence of persons, contexts, and content, (2) upholds the interrelation of ecclesial tasks (formation, teaching, proclamation, worship, service, and advocacy), (3) maintains a concern for both ecclesial identity and ecclesial relevance in the world, and (4) remains sensitive to changes in a postmodern world (technological domination, globalization, pluralism, information saturation, and loss of cultural memory). Pazmino concludes this study with a ringing call for Christian educators to fully engage the postmodern world with wisdom, discernment, confidence, and humility. He also provides a short bibliography for each chapter he discusses.

I want to mention three concerns that *God Our Teacher* presents for me. First, Pazmino's emphasis upon ecumenical Christian education, listening to the voices of others, and addressing multicultural context, which is so strong and appropriate, deserves more scholarly attention beyond evangelicalism. Perhaps a change of publishers is warranted for his next book. Second, his search for a trinitarian grammar for Christian education falls short, in my estimation, because of the way he conceives the task. He discusses aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity and then seeks to draw out educational implications of that doctrine. This method seems too static and lacks the complexity needed to articulate a truly trinitarian practical theology of Christian education. Pazmino needs a stronger theory of the dynamic relation of trinitarian history to human history which shows how complex matrices of interdependent human action (biological, psychological, social, and cultural) are taken up in and through divine action and affirmed, crucified, and resurrected according to the nature of Christ. Third, one step toward a more dynamic treatment might be to rework the discussion of "God *despite* us" (Chapter Two) into the warp and woof of the other chapters, so that one never considers God *for* us, *with* us, *in* us, *through* us, or *beyond* us apart from our continued resistance to the divine initiative, and from our culture's continued efforts to domesticate the gospel.

Dana R. Wright
Princeton Theological Seminary

Mack, Dana and David Blankenhorn, eds. *The Book of Marriage: The Wisest Answers to the Toughest Questions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. Pp. 620. \$30.00.

Dana Mack and David Blankenhorn, from the Institute for American Values, have provided a valuable resource for those interested in the institution of marriage. This collection of readings on the subject of marriage and family life, taken from a wide variety of historical and contemporary authors, provides the reader with easy access to a breadth of source material for preaching and counseling. An impressive advisory board from a vast array of disciplines assisted in selecting a rich diversity of writings from the Bible to Bill Cosby, and from Homer to Franz Kafka. Arranged chronologically, each of the ten chapters begins with a helpful introduction from the editors and takes the reader through the lifecycle of a marriage, from wedding vows to growing old together. The science of marriage becomes wonderfully framed by the more encompassing art of marriage, with brush strokes provided by some of history's most eloquent artists.

Self-help books abound on the subject of marriage. One senses that the editors seek to broaden and deepen the contemporary discussion by recapturing the best wisdom of the past for today. Both the ideals of marriage and the personal challenges couples face trying to attain them receive attention. There is even a chapter on divorce. The attempt to enlarge current understanding and deepen contemporary perspective on the foundations of marriage is welcome. Wisdom from the Western world seasoned with insight from Eastern sources such as the *Qur'an* and Zeami Motokiyo are given voice concerning this institution at the heart of every culture. The expansive treatment of the subject is the book's greatest strength, albeit from primarily a masculine perspective. Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Apostle Paul, Geoffrey Chaucer, Jane Austen, Tolstoy, Erik Erikson and many others are assembled together to speak once again about the value of marriage and the importance of marital success for the entire community.

If the expansive treatment is the book's greatest strength, so too is it a weakness. In the attempt to provide "a single comprehensive book of source readings for the general market" the project's reach has perhaps exceeded its grasp. It is not comprehensive enough, which is very likely a criticism of every one-volume anthology. In this case, there is little mention of polygamy, though the *Qur'an* reading on divorce speaks of "wives" in the plural and Mohammed is identified in the introduction as having "practiced polygamy only after his first wife's death." The section from *The Code of Maimonides* is introduced with a reference to Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon as the "liberator of

Jewish women" because his interpretation of Jewish law led to an end of the practice of polygamy among Jewish peoples. And there is no mention of homosexual marriage, a current issue in American society and in the church. This book is more narrowly conceived in classical Western understandings of marriage, with only a few selected readings from Eastern sources that support the ideals of marriage framed in such a manner. For those who view marriage as socially constructed, any attempt to identify universally held beliefs and customs is probably suspect from the beginning. It may not be possible to separate the institution of marriage from the cultural and religious contexts in which it is embedded and finds expression without also losing important nuances in understanding. Like examining the human heart, one cannot appreciate how it functions unless one examines it in relation to the rest of the body. Married life is simply not defined the same way for all people everywhere.

Western ideals of monogamy are literally re-membered and in this there is much to glean for Christian faith and life today. For theological reflection, the classic "quadrilateral" criteria—Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience (identified in *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church and elsewhere)—are all incorporated, a welcome departure from over reliance on experience alone. Selections from Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and others complement the Scriptural text selections, providing source material for discussion of the differences among sacramental, covenantal, and contractual frameworks for understanding marriage in Western societies. Like the ingredients of a well known spaghetti sauce, "it's all in there." Western societies have all but forgotten the dependency of marriage on theologically constructed presuppositions. *The Book of Marriage* is a valuable resource for more than scholars and professionals. It uncovers the structural supports that have undergirded the institution of marriage for centuries. In this period of utilitarianism, historic perspective is helpful. Despite its shortcomings, *The Book of Marriage*, if widely read, might actually strengthen family life by deepening the understanding and the commitment of married couples. This book is a solid contribution toward the goal identified in many wedding ceremonies that "marriage be held in honor by all."

Jeffrey V. O'Grady
Princeton Theological Seminary

Bernall, Misty. *She Said Yes: The Unlikely Martyrdom of Cassie Bernall*. Nashville: Word, 1999. Pp. 142. \$17.00.

On April 20, 1999 Cassie Bernall was killed when two classmates went on a rampage through their high school setting off bombs, shooting their fellow

students, and finally, turning their weapons on themselves. Holding a gun to her head, Cassie's killer asked, "Do you believe in God?" Cassie said, "Yes." Cassie Bernall has been heralded as a modern-day martyr. Using Cassie's notes and letters, interviews with friends and family members, and her own recollections, Misty Bernall, Cassie's mother, tells the story not only of her daughter's death but also the remarkable story of the last three years of Cassie's life.

Three years before her death, Cassie was on a path much like that of her killers. Misty's description of this time is honest and straightforward. She explains how Cassie was dabbling in the occult and toying with the idea of suicide. She "hated" her parents and even had a friend who wrote notes telling her to kill her parents. Misty explains, "... Cassie's change from a trusting child to a sulking stranger was so gradual that it blindsided us. It was only when we started getting calls from [her] high school about her ditching classes . . . and when we caught her in one too many little lies—that we began to take things more seriously. We were losing our daughter."

The reader is given important insights into the parent/teen relationship. Misty and her husband, Brad, intervened in their daughter's life. Placing her in a new school, forbidding her to see her old friends, even tapping their home phone, they went to great lengths to repair their relationship with Cassie and to save her from the destructive path she was on. Misty says that she stopped catering to Cassie's every whim in an effort to be her "buddy." Instead, she began to see her role as "a mentor and confidant." "I stopped trying to please Cassie and make her like me, and I started trying to guide her more consistently." She says her daughter did not rebel as she had expected but seemed to appreciate the boundaries.

Cassie's real turnaround happened on a church retreat. Upon returning home, she told her mother, "I've changed." Misty says Cassie did not talk much about her experience but that she was different from then on. "Her eyes were bright, she smiled again like she hadn't for years." Cassie was much like any other young Christian. She was involved in her church youth group and sought a deeper understanding of her newfound faith. Misty makes it clear that Cassie was no saint. She was a teenager, after all!

It is this "ordinary" teenager who faced a violent death in an extraordinary manner. Cassie's faith in the face of death gave much needed encouragement to people in a time of despair. This account of her struggles and turnaround in life will inspire readers today. In telling the story of Cassie's life and death, Misty Bernall gives the reader a glimpse into the heart and mind of adolescents and points to the important sacrifices parents must make to raise children in today's, sometimes violent, youth culture. It is a wake up call to parents and church leaders who care about young people today. Misty

acknowledges that we cannot “undo what happened at Columbine” but we can make changes in how we care for young people so that such a tragedy will never happen again.

Dayle Gillespie Rounds
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Princeton Theological Seminary

Beal, Timothy K. *Religion and Its Monsters*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Pp. 235. \$19.95.

“It is hard to keep a chaos monster down”—especially when that monster turns out to be an uncanny reflection of ourselves, our own culture and ideology. In this book, Timothy Beal explores the role of religion, especially the Jewish and Christian traditions, in the production of the monsters that live in our popular stories. He argues, among other things, that we need the “dangerous otherness” of these monsters, because they show us (they demonstrate) who we are. Our monsters focalize both our deepest fears and our strongest desires. Indeed, our religion stands in an intimate relation to these monsters, whom we either demonize or deify—or both at once. They represent “a profound and abiding sense of precariousness and insecurity built into the order of things.”

Following a brief introduction, the book is divided into two parts, each consisting of six chapters, followed by a conclusion, extensive notes, and an index. Also included are a number of black and white illustrations, which range from medieval paintings to William Blake engravings to movie stills. Unfortunately, one must search the notes for complete bibliographic information.

The first part of the book, also titled “Religion and Its Monsters,” explores the traditional sources in which the monsters first appear. These texts include the *Enuma Elish*, the Bible (both Jewish and Christian canons), and the Talmud, although Beal focuses mainly on the Hebrew Scriptures. He surveys a wide range of monsters, including ancient near eastern deities such as Tiamat, Apophis, and Anat, as well as the biblical beasts, Leviathan and Behemoth, Jonah’s fish, and the apocalyptic dragon of the Revelation of John. Beal uncovers the monstrous side of God, both as an alien and incomprehensible being, in ANE myths, the Psalms, and the book of Job, and as the playmate of monsters, especially Leviathan. Indeed, the biblical texts are deeply divided about Leviathan, who is sometimes God’s creature and a sign of God’s power, and sometimes God’s enemy, an alternative God—and thus they are also divided about the character of God. The monster God is both terrifying and fascinating.

The book's second part is titled "Monsters and Their Religion," and it explores the modern (post-Renaissance) descendants of these monsters. These include several versions of Dracula, Frankenstein's creature, robots and cyborgs, and H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu. The texts range from the writings of Thomas Hobbes and nineteenth-century "oriental" travel narratives to Harry Potter books, the *Godzilla* and *Alien* movies, and recent "Goth" popular music. Beal shows how the religious function of the monsters continues to operate even when the stories have been radically secularized in books and films such as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

In the course of this wide-ranging survey, Beal generates a diverse collection of textual studies that strongly support his thesis. Scholars may be disappointed that he has not tackled in greater depth some of the thornier theological issues manifested by these monsters—there is no mention of Ricoeur or Girard, and his discussions of Freud, Eliade, and Levinas are quite brief—but Beal writes primarily as a literary and cultural critic, not a theologian. He contributes strongly to the growing dialogue between biblical studies and horror studies, a dialogue that began only 10 years ago with horror scholar Roger Schlobin's article, "Prototypic Horror: the Genre of the Book of Job," in *Semeia* 60. *Religion and Its Monsters* is an invitation to continue this exploration, not the definitive statement on the subject. Indeed, if we accept Beal's claim that the monstrous always indicates the sublime limits of language and imagination, how could a definitive statement on this topic ever be made?

This book is thoroughly readable and engaging—it truly is hard to put down. Beal's use of humor is admirable. This book should be accessible to any reasonably well-educated adult, and even high school students, and it would be excellent for use in either college classes or church study groups. I highly recommend it to anyone with interests in this area.

George Aichele
Adrian College

Wink, Walter. *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of the Man*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. Pp. 356. \$26.00.

Readers of Walter Wink's earlier books—*Naming the Powers* (1982), *Unmasking the Powers* (1986), *Engaging the Powers* (1992), *When the Powers Fall* (1998)—will not be surprised to find in this new book a Christology 'below the powers.' Wink, Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary, portrays Jesus as the true 'Human Being.' Caught in what Wink calls the 'Domination System' of the powers, humanity struggles to

emerge from the dehumanizing effects of the powers in order to achieve the God-intended form of humanity which is not to become more like God in his deity but to become authentically human—that is, more like God in his humanity. Jesus, who emerges from within the human condition, is not the incarnation of God into a human form, but the incarnation of humanity into the true image of God.

Rather than continuing the quest for the historical Jesus, Wink embarks on a quest for the human Jesus, using the cryptic phrase by which Jesus obliquely refers to himself—The Son of the Man, or as Wink prefers, 'The Human Being.' Noting that the phrase, 'son of man' occurs 108 times in the Hebrew Scriptures (93 of these in Ezekiel), and 87 times in the New Testament (all but 3 times in the Gospels), Wink ponders how this phrase came to be used only by Jesus as a direct reference to himself as a synonym for 'I.' The Aramatic form—*bar enasha*—is translated into Greek as *ho huios tou anthropou*—literally, the son of the man. Wink says: "This odd Greek idiom is so awkward that virtually all translators omit the second definite article. In this study I will render the expression literally, with both articles, to underscore its oddness and crudity." At the same time, for the sake of a more elegant expression and to capture what Wink feels is the direct link between Jesus' use of the phrase and Ezekiel, he often uses the phrase, 'The Human Being,' as for instance, in the title of the book.

Despite the technical nature of this discussion and the erudition with which Wink approaches the subject, the book is eminently readable and more like a conversation than a scholarly lecture. Wink invites the reader to think along with him without presenting his argument in a polemical way. The book is laid out in six major parts, with a total of sixteen chapters. Part One consists of only one chapter and presents his basic assumptions and methodology in his discussion of The Original Impulse of Jesus. This discussion is followed by, The Anthropic Revelation: The Human Being (three chapters); The Human Being: Pre-Easter Sayings (three chapters); The Human Being: Post-Easter Sayings (seven chapters); The Human Being in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism (two chapters); followed by Part Six: Results and Conclusions.

A core assumption for Wink is his consistent view of the irreconcilable conflict between 'the powers' and the Reign of the Kingdom of God. This assumption pervades his study in such a way that it becomes a hermeneutical criterion. The exegesis of every text in which Jesus uses the expression, The Son of the Man, is read so as to throw in contrast the being of Jesus with the world's attempt to achieve recognition and status through the use of power.

Traditional readings of such texts which portray Jesus as claiming divine or supernatural power, or even as a title for the Messiah, are dismissed in favor of a reading in which Jesus refuses power and, instead, points to The Human Being as accessible to all persons by which God's grace and peace are to be experienced.

Key to Wink's thesis is his use of Ezekiel as the primary source of Jesus' allusions to The Son of the Man. In his discussion of Ezekiel's vision (1:26-2:1), he suggests that God appears on the throne, as it were, Human, and Ezekiel as The Son of the Human. According to Wink, this is not a figure of speech, but the 'human face' of God turned toward Ezekiel. From this Wink concludes that God is really Human, and since we are in God's image, we are called to be truly human ourselves. Wink then argues that Jesus' use of the phrase, 'The Son of the Man' is a self-conscious reference to Ezekiel's vision of the Human Being of God. He then undertakes an examination of all of the New Testament texts in which Jesus uses the phrase. He concludes that Jesus never uses this phrase as a title, or as a nickname, nor as a circumlocution for self-reference, but always as a third person reference, both in an individual and a corporate sense.

Wink suggests that The Son of the Man as referred to by Jesus "represents the urge to actualize the self, inner and outer. The Powers are what prevent our becoming. The Human Being is the lure toward our becoming. The Reign of God—God's domination-free order—is the goal of our becoming." In every case, argues Wink, Jesus' use of The Son of the Man, or The Human Being, refers not to Jesus' messianic claim or to divine authority, but to that which is the quintessence of humanity, that to which every human is urged to become, and that which Jesus became most fully. Jesus thus made no messianic claim for himself, but summoned people to "discover the Messiah within themselves." In his study, Wink has nuanced the Son of Man phrase as used by Jesus in a provocative and highly unusual way, especially in his use of Ezekiel's vision. However it remains to be seen how OT and NT exegetes respond to his interpretation of the Ezekielian texts and the Son of Man phrase in the Gospels.

Wink, however, intends this book to be more than a contribution to the discussion of the Son of Man sayings. He urges the reader to consider this book as a Christology from below, using the Son of Man sayings as his guide. Who then is this Jesus, if not the Messiah (Christ), if not the divine Son of God in human form, if not the Lord worthy of worship? He is not God incarnate, suggests Wink, but the incarnation of the Human Person as the archetype of the humanity to which we all are summoned to become (to incarnate!). Jesus is the Human Being (Ezekiel's human/God) incarnate in

the frail, weak, and suffering humanity under the control of the powers from which he seeks to liberate all humanity. There was no virgin birth, no incarnation of a divine being. Jesus is not to be worshipped or viewed as divine. As with all humans, Jesus makes mistakes, and sinned. For Wink, Jesus is "not the Jesus of the two natures, or the second person of the trinity, or the one who is of one being (*homoousios*) with the Father . . . I want to worship the God Jesus worshiped, not worship Jesus as God." Rather than the resurrection as an event within history, Wink describes it as the "intrapsychic transformation taking place in believers after the ascension . . . that is the real miracle of Easter."

In the end, a nagging questions remains. If, as Wink suggests, The Human Person is one aspect of God's being, why is it necessary to deny the deity of Jesus as the incarnation of God for the sake of his true humanity? Wink cites Karl Barth in support of his claim that God's deity also includes God's humanity. But Barth surely intends to mean that in assuming humanity through incarnation (virgin birth and all!) Jesus continues to be *homoousion to patri*, a point that Wink rejects. In denying the two natures of Christ, Wink virtually ascribes two natures to God—one human and one divine. Why does it have to be 'either/or'? Much of what Wink has offered with regard to the real humanity of Jesus is a helpful correction to a docetic Christology. But if one is forced to deny the deity of Christ in order to accept his humanity, that may be a price too high to pay.

This reviewer wonders whether Wink arrives at his "Christology of humanity" as a conclusion to his exegetical study or whether he brings to his study a version of Jesus as primarily a human mystic (Berdyavey) in whom the archetype (Jung) of the Human Person is present as a hermeneutical criterion. I suspect the latter. For this reason, his contribution to the literature on The Son of the Man may be overshadowed for many readers by his humanistic and reductionistic Christology.

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Jüngel, Eberhard. *Justification: the Heart of the Christian Faith*. Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 2001. Pp. 304. \$49.95.

I wish I could be more singlemindedly positive about this work by a theologian from whom I have learned so much. In part I am put off by wobbly translation. But Jüngel himself seems to me not at his analytical or stylistic best, despite the acclaim the original work received in Germany. Indeed, that acclaim itself is part of my problem, since it resulted from the book's origin

as the chief theological armory in the German campaign against the Catholic/Lutheran *Joint Declaration on Justification*. Finally, the doctrine presented here is one certain features of which seem ever more dubious to me.

Justification is expounded by Jüngel as *Protestantism's* defining doctrine, and the Protestantism in question will be quickly recognized by non-Germans as very much *German-Lutheran* Protestantism. The theology is of course Jüngel's own as well, original in some ways and technically more indebted to Barth than to any Reformer. And there is much to learn from it. I wish, e.g., that I had read Jüngel's exposition of the *trinitarian* ground of justification much earlier, I would simply have stolen it: God can be at once righteous in himself and justifier of "the ungodly" opposed to him, *in that* the Spirit binds the "personal otherness of the Father and Son," which is the maximal "otherness of life and death," into a "*fellowship of mutual otherness*," (emphases added). This harmony with himself is God's own righteousness.

But then my reservations. For one, Jüngel's book cannot be evaluated wholly apart from its ecumenical setting. Jüngel, like most German Protestant theologians, tends to suppose that it is the Reformers' theology which is to be represented in ecumenical dialogue with Rome. But admire Luther or Calvin as one may, the Protestant party in dialogue is not confessionally bound to *any* individual opinions, but only to the Reformation churches' confessional standards, whether or not these adequately exploit the Reformers' deepest insights. If I represent Lutheran churches in ecumenical dialogue I am not permitted to make agreement with Luther a condition of certifying doctrinal concord. German (and Norwegian) theologians rarely get this point, which often makes them impossible ecumenical participants *or* commentators.

My other reservation concerns the way in which Ebeling's and Jüngel's sort of Lutheranism understands justification itself. The problem is already signalled by Jüngel's title, for "justification" is surely *not* "the heart of the Christian faith." Christ personally is, or if we think of discourse, the narrative that renders his person is. And there is a difference between Christ and *any* concept used to characterize him or the story that renders him.

Both the power and the errors of Jüngel's doctrine, and of the German Protestantism of which it is a typical instance, appear in the following passage. "What appears to be a contradiction [between God's being righteous and his justifying the ungodly] must be seen as absolutely free of contradiction. . . . This is only possible if we decide on what a righteous God is like, *not* on the basis of the normal use of the concepts, but only on the basis of his justifying the ungodly." Now one must emphatically agree that our interpretation of God's righteous being must not be "on the basis of the normal use"

of the concept of righteousness. But it must also not be on the basis of one Pauline theologoumenon, that God "justifies the ungodly." It must be on the basis of that event itself, of what happens with Christ, told in the biblical story of his deeds and words and of his death and resurrection. This book, and the sort of German Protestantism it represents, tends too readily to replace the story of Christ with a theologoumenon.

The subsequent necessity to build all of theology on this one theologoumenon then carries several problems in its train, all of which appear in the book under review. The "distinction of law and gospel" becomes an ontological principle, which results in a semi-Marcionite attitude to the Old Testament. The New Testament canon effectively shrinks to the Pauline letters. The Resurrection appears only as interpretation of the Cross. And one is blinded to a plain and ecumenically vital textual fact, that Trent and the Lutherans failed to achieve disagreement, much as by that time both sides wanted it.

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Leith, John H. *Pilgrimage of a Presbyterian: Collected Shorter Writings*. Louisville: Geneva, 2001. Pp. 363. \$29.95.

John Leith is one of the leading Southern Presbyterian theologians and churchmen of the last fifty years. *Pilgrimage of a Presbyterian: Collected Shorter Writings*, as the subtitle suggests, is a collection of Leith's writings. Ordained in 1943, Leith pastored Presbyterian churches in Mobile Alabama, Nashville Tennessee, Auburn Alabama, and Lindale Georgia and taught theology for two years at Columbia Theological Seminary. From 1959 until his retirement in 1990, he was the Pemberton Professor of Theology at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia where he taught a generation of seminarians. He also served as Moderator of the Synod of North Carolina as well as on four committees of the General Assembly, including those which revised the *Book of Church Order* and produced the Brief Statement of Faith for the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

Edited by Charles E. Raynal, the director of advanced studies and an associate professor of theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, this eclectic collection of Leith's brief writings, many previously published, are loosely organized around several topics, including theology, faith and learning, theological education, and other issues before the church. Pieces are

drawn from all periods of Leith's career. The volume also includes twenty-one sermons, six chapel meditations, and eight editorials from the *Presbyterian Outlook*. The volume concludes with two pieces from Leith's classroom activities, "Questions and Suggestions for the Study of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*" and a syllabus for a course in the history of Christian doctrine, as well as an exhaustive bibliography of Leith's books, articles, editorials, and recorded sermons and lectures.

Leith was part of a generation of theological educators who did not face the professional pressure, or perhaps temptation, to divorce their scholarship from their participation in the life of the church. Widely published in Calvin studies, Leith was part of the neo-orthodox theological movement among mid-twentieth-century American Presbyterians. He attempted to bring his scholarly expertise and theological commitments to bear upon the pressing ecclesiastical issues of his day. Many of the essays in this volume reflect those efforts. In addition to chapters on the Reformed doctrine of predestination and Calvin's understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the volume includes some of Leith's sermons against racism in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. and two very short pieces addressing the contemporary debate over the ordination of homosexuals.

In the brief two-page preface, Leith professes that "I gladly stand on the record of what I said as the articles represent my commitments then and now." If Professor Leith had written a lengthy biographical reflection, his volume would have been more interesting. Had it been something more like the old *Christian Century* column "How My Mind Has Changed," such a preface could have illuminated the life work of this leading Southern Presbyterian theologian. Perhaps it would have explained a conundrum such as this: how is it that someone who can be so deeply committed to the Reformed principle of "Reformed and always reforming" would not have changed his mind, revised a commitment, or even nuanced a position over a fifty year career. Perhaps he has. But this volume does not address it. This issue is especially compelling because Professor Leith spearheaded the theological avant garde that brought neoorthodoxy into the Southern Presbyterian church and drove "fundamentalism," as Leith characterized it, out of the church. It would have been fascinating to hear him ruminate about how his own theology changed or matured over his lifetime. What are his positions on contemporary theological conflicts, such as Amendment A and the Confessing Church Movement? What does he now think about the theological changes that took place in the previous generation? This volume will probably interest only two groups. Graduates of Union Seminary will likely enjoy this collection of their professor's writings. Historians will find this volume a

useful resource of the writings of a church leader, educator, and theologian who once influenced a generation of Presbyterians.

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Kim, Seyoon. *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. Pp. 336. \$25.00.

Beginning with the publication of E. P. Sanders's magisterial work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* in 1977, Pauline scholars have re-examined their understanding of Judaism as a religion of pure works-righteousness. This has resulted in what James D. G. Dunn called in his 1983 essay by the same title, "The New Perspective on Paul." This "new perspective" focuses on the social and cultural background that led to the development of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith and has challenged the traditional Reformation understanding of justification which focuses on the soteriological plight of the individual who seeks to attain righteousness by "good works."

While the "new perspective" has been a dominant voice in Pauline studies for twenty years, Seyoon Kim's work *Paul and the New Perspective* suggests that the pendulum is beginning to readjust itself. Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, Professor Kim is the author of a significant 1977 dissertation written under the direction of F. F. Bruce that was published as *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* in 1981, about the time that the "new perspective" was getting underway. In that work Kim argued that Paul's understanding of justification by faith, as well as his understanding of his mission to the Gentiles, originated in the Christophany he experienced on the road to Damascus when Christ appeared to him as the "image" (*eikōn*) of God's glory.

Professor Dunn, the leading exponent of the "new perspective," has challenged Kim's interpretation of Paul's Damascus road experience, interpreting it in terms of Paul's call to be the apostle to the Gentiles rather than in the theological categories of justification and Christology that Kim employs. Thus Dunn argues that Paul's doctrine of justification developed later in light of the controversies that he faced in Antioch and Galatia. From Kim's perspective the "new perspective" is minimalist and does not do justice to Paul's claim that he received his gospel from a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:11-17).

In this book Kim vigorously responds to Dunn and the "new perspective" through a series of essays that revisit and defend his original thesis of Paul's Damascus road experience. Thus, these essays deal with one

significant question in a variety of ways: What did God communicate to Paul when he revealed his Son to him? In the first and longest essay, "Paul's Conversion/Call," Kim argues that Paul's teaching on justification by faith originated with his Damascus road experience. In the second, "Justification by Grace and through Faith in 1 Thessalonians," he tries to establish that even though Paul does not use the language of righteousness in 1 Thessalonians, he taught his converts that they are justified by faith. By showing that Paul understood his call in light of Isaiah 42, Kim argues in his third essay, "Isaiah 42 and Paul's Call," that Paul preached justification by faith during the earliest stages of his ministry. Taking up the difficult text of Galatians 3:10-14 in his fourth essay, "Paul, the Spirit, and the Law," Kim shows that first-century Judaism, especially as practiced by the pre-Christian Paul, was not entirely free of works-righteousness as the "new perspective" claims. In the fifth essay, "Christ, the Image of God and the Last Adam," Kim revisits his thesis that Paul received his understanding of Christ as the "image" of God at his Damascus Road experience. In the sixth essay, "2 Corinthians 5:11-21 and the Origin of Paul's Concept of Reconciliation," he makes a similar claim for Paul's theology of reconciliation. And in the seventh, "The 'Mystery' of Romans 11:25-25," he goes further to argue that Paul learned of God's salvation plan, the fate of Israel and the Gentiles, at the time of his conversion. The last essay, "The Jesus Tradition in Paul," forcefully argues that Paul knew more about Jesus and the Jesus tradition than is usually supposed.

Though overly self-referential, this is a stimulating collection of essays that presents an important challenge to the "new perspective." Technical in nature, however, this book is not the place to begin for those unfamiliar with the debate.

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Freedman, David Noel and Michael J. McClymond, eds. *The Rivers of Paradise: Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad as Religious Founders*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. Pp. 702. \$50.00.

Since the Enlightenment Christians have asked, more methodically than before that period, how they know what they claim to know about the historical Jesus. This large and rich book is, among other things, an attempt to answer that question not only about Jesus but also about four other "religious founders" who are thought to head up "the great personality religions of the world": Buddha, Confucius, Moses, and Muhammad. A review of this size cannot even begin to respond to these sophisticated and

multilayered essays, each of which constitutes a short book in itself. So I will merely highlight some salient features of each.

Daniel C. Peterson suggests that we can know a great deal about the life and thinking of the founder of Islam. In a well-written and magnificently informative account, Peterson shows that Islam's beginnings were more Arabian than most have imagined. Many Islamic themes, for example, retrace pre-Islamic ideas: bravery in battle, defiance of the strong, honor, generosity, revenge, and poetry as a medium of both divine prophecy and cultural criticism. The Qur'an imitates pre-Islamic *saj'*, elevated prose in which lines have no meter but final words rhyme. Peterson asserts that while there were pre-Islamic monotheists among the Arab tribes, in their earliest revelations Muhammad and the Qur'an were only vaguely monotheistic and in fact recognized other beings besides Allah as divine or at least archangelic. According to Peterson, Muhammad himself did not think of himself as founding a new religion but as "getting behind the divisions of Judaism and Christianity, back to the original *muslim* or 'submitter,' Abraham."

Peterson's story is full of surprises for non-specialists. In the early Constitution of Medina (622 C.E.), for example, Muslims agreed to defend Jews against injustice, even if perpetrated by a fellow Muslim, while Jews promised the same protection for Muslims. For the next two years Muslims faced Jerusalem when they prayed, and fasted not at Ramadan but for ten days surrounding the (Jewish) Day of Atonement. Jewish-Muslim relations soured later, however, when the Jewish tribe Banu Nadir repeatedly opposed Islam, and Muhammad had their 600-900 men executed and their women and children sold into slavery.

The violent response to Banu Nadir opposition was not the only time when Muhammad dealt with his opponents harshly. In Medina two poets who directed their words against him were run through with a sword while they slept (one was a woman who was killed while resting with her children); the same fate befell several "opposition" poets in Mecca when he took that city. Peterson explains that poets possessed enormous cultural power, and links these assassinations by way of precedent to Islam's recent *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie.

Michael McClymond's temperate and comprehensive rendering of the searches for the historical Jesus is one of the best short introductions to Jesus research now available. McClymond notes the sea-change that occurred in Jesus research in the twentieth century: while Bultmann despaired of knowing anything reliable about the life and personality of the historical Jesus, recent scholars such as E. P. Sanders think "that we can know pretty well what Jesus was out to accomplish, that we can know a lot about what he said,

and that these two things make sense within the world of first-century Judaism." McClymond follows those scholars who dismiss John Dominic Crossan's estimate of Jesus as a wandering Cynic philosopher (because of discrepancies in lifestyle and mission), arguing that Jesus was both eschatological and sapiential in his message(s). He discounts the importance of apocryphal gospels because they show signs of being later redactions of the four canonical gospels. McClymond is also skeptical of the authenticity criteria used by scholars to determine which pericopes go back to the historical Jesus. Here he commends Sanders' admonitions that there are no reliable rules for the development of the synoptic tradition, which unfolded in wildly differing directions: "This means that no one can construct a trajectory of the early literary development that is complete and detailed and nuanced enough to allow definitive judgments regarding what in the Gospels does or does not go back to Jesus." The origin of early church Christology, McClymond concludes, is not to be drawn from isolated "Son of God" or "Son of Man" texts, but Jesus' intimations that association with himself was equivalent to repentance, by which he put himself above both Torah and Temple.

Richard S. Cohen argues convincingly that Buddha was not a religious founder like Jesus or Muhammad because perhaps a majority of Buddhists use Shakyamuni (the fifth-century B.C.E. figure commonly called "Buddha") and his teachings as a means to seek and worship other Buddhas. In addition, we know very little about him because most understandings of his "life" come from synthetic redactions of local lore separated from Shakyamuni by several centuries. All biographies of Buddha contain "facts" that were predetermined by notions of the ideal Buddha—biography was driven by typology.

Not only is there no historical Buddha which we can access, but there is no essential Buddhism. There is no doctrine of any sophistication on which all Buddhists agree. Hence "one can neither posit an essentially pure Buddhism to be found at this religion's origin nor examine its historical development in light of a teleological model."

Carl S. Ehrlich's portrait of the image of Moses in Judaism and Mark Csikszentmihalyi's sketch of different visions of Confucius are similarly agnostic about their subjects. Ehrlich argues that Jewish theology and intra-mural conflict have been driven by the questions, Who is Moses? and Who has the authority to speak in his name? Ironically, however, exodus and covenant were both "creative fiction," and we do not even know if Moses existed. Ehrlich overreaches: in the presence of circumstantial evidence (much of which Ehrlich acknowledges) that would make both exodus and Moses plausible, Ehrlich's historiographical atheism seems tendentious.

According to Csikszentmihalyi, there is no definitive evidence for the historical identity of Confucius. So his name is a *tabula rasa* on which numerous traditions have made their imprints: "a 'First Teacher' whose descendants still annotate the classics that he promoted, a philosopher whose ethical precepts educators teach at academies across the globe, a ritual expert at whose temples state authorities have carried out the *tailao* sacrifice." Hence Confucianism has had a variety of founders who have been called Confucius.

In the last chapters McClymond and his fellow authors debate Max Weber's model of religious founders. McClymond argues that these religious founders, contra Weber, (1) did not sharply break with existing cultural and religious traditions, (2) founded new rituals, and (3) were shaped in part by the very communities to which they were giving new direction. His colleagues make interesting and helpful responses.

This carefully-prepared volume may serve as a model for future collaborative attempts to analyze discrete dimensions of selected great religions. Since the essays are more historiographical than biographical, they would not stand alone as introductions to the respective religions, despite claims to that effect on the cover. But they would serve admirably as supplemental reading in an introductory or upper-level course in the history of religions.

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Fiddes, Paul S. *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000. Pp. 312. \$29.95.

Paul S. Fiddes is a theologian with an impressive range. In *Participating in God*, as in his other books, he engages in critical conversation with major theologians, past and present. His books always introduce readers to the relevant literature and break through the artificial barriers of specialization. Here he brings together the doctrine of the Trinity and the pastoral task of the church and notes "that this is no new venture, for the doctrine of the Trinity has been a pastoral theology from its formulation." *Participating in God* is a wide-ranging introduction to the Christian doctrine of God and a serious attempt to reformulate pastoral theology.

The book divides into two unequal halves. Part One, "Persons and Participation," lays down the core argument. Part Two, "Further into God and the World," discusses prayer, suffering, love and forgiveness, death, spiritual gifts, and sacramental life and embodiment. Fiddes aims

"to develop an image of God which is appropriate to the demands of experience in pastoral care." He intends to explore how participating in God affects both the image of God *and* pastoral actions.

The core thesis is that the divine Persons are constituted by their relations to each other: "There are no persons 'at each end of a relation,' but the 'persons' are simply the relations." Thus his term "persons *as* relationships," rather than the social doctrine of the Trinity—persons in relationship—is used to prepare the way for participation as the appropriate mode of knowing and engaging in the triune life of God. Readers familiar with Zizioulas, LaCugna, Volf, Moltmann, A. J. Torrance, and others will find themselves on familiar ground.

Participating in God leads Fiddes to push his argument toward action (the point of practical theology). He employs the late patristic concept of *perichoresis* to express the divine Persons' way of participating in one another, meaning coinherence without confusion. "God *happens*, in an interweaving flow of relationships." Fiddes, however, makes an odd move. Acknowledging that the root is *choreo*, to make room for, and not *choreia*, to dance, he nevertheless interprets *perichoresis* according to the image of the dance. Dance implies movements of relationships rather than individual subjects who have relations. This is a move of convenience.

Why is it necessary? Throughout, Fiddes makes reference to the work of Christ. Christ is "deeply immersed into the flow of relationships within God, and is the point of access where human persons can participate in the dance of these relations." Fiddes, however, does not develop the ministry of Christ to the Father as the human response to God, in whose response we share through the Holy Spirit. As "the point of access," the argument requires an exploration of the nature of Christ's mediatorial sonship in which, according to Athanasius, "We must say that our Lord, being Word and Son of God, bore a body, and became Son of Man, that, having become Mediator between God and men, He might minister the things of God to us, and ours to God" (*Contra Arianos* IV.6). Fiddes requires also significant development of union with Christ—the work of the Holy Spirit—by which we share in Christ's communion with the Father and in his mission from the Father (see J. B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*).

Fiddes develops his perichoretic theology of participating in God in provocative and helpful ways throughout the second part of the book. However, as he moves through the range of pastoral concerns he turns toward a panentheistic rather than a Christological interpretation of participating in God. The seeds for this move have already been sowed. Fiddes rightly wants

to understand pastoral work in terms of engagement with a personal God. If indeed Christ is "the point of access," as Fiddes properly suggests, the major task for pastoral theology is still an exploration of ministry as *participation Christi*.

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Aichele, George. *The Control of Biblical Meaning: Canon as Semiotic Mechanism*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001. Pp. 272. \$26.00.

Biblical theologians commonly understand the Christian canon as a vehicle which shapes the message of the Scripture. They typically assume that the canon *enables* readers to understand and hear the message of the Bible. George Aichele, a "postecclesiastical theologian," takes a contrasting view. He claims that, "the canon *prevents* readers from freely reading the texts of the Bible." This study contends that the canon both severely limits and ideologically controls biblical meaning.

Aichele is not interested in the historical development of the Christian canon, but rather interprets canon solely "as a semiotic and ideological mechanism." History is understood as a "deeply ideological" semiotic construct, which may be reduced to the dynamics of political power. Thus, canonical texts survive not because of anything internal to the text, but "because of the exercise of institutional power."

Aichele uses three criteria to define canon: (1) "a list or catalog of books that is believed to be indispensable by some group of people," who (2) understand it as "an unchanging and complete repository of truths and values," which (3) "establishes an intertextual network that provides a reading context through which any of its component texts can be understood correctly . . ." It is a small step from this definition to the conclusion that, "the canon constructs and controls the meaning of the Bible."

Rejecting any claim to "a 'final form' of the canon," Aichele surprisingly restricts his analysis to "the [*sic*] canon of the Protestant Christian Bible" and uses only Greek and English versions of the Bible, including the Old Testament. He chooses the RSV as his primary English translation, asserting that it is "a 'literal' translation of the ancient manuscripts."

Given his postmodern semiotic and ideological assumptions, Aichele devotes the first part of the book ("The Control of Denotation") to exploring the concept of canon on four levels: (1) semiotic theory and ideology, (2) textual media and technology, (3) ideologies of translation, and (4) the "imperial" notion of canon as a "classic."

The remainder of the book is fittingly entitled "Wild Connotations"—e.g., "The story of Pentecost is a science fiction story about a future metamorphosis of the human race." This section offers a range of inventive readings of biblical texts based upon the conceptual frame developed earlier. Aichele's test cases focus upon tensions of biblical intertextuality. Particular attention is given to the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, which in Aichele's view reflects a "colonizing appropriation." The book concludes with pessimistic speculation on the future of the canon in light of postmodern and electronic dimensions of contemporary culture. A brief technical glossary accompanies the bibliography and indices.

Aichele is well-versed in literary criticism, semiotics, and allied philosophical fields. He is particularly creative in fashioning cross-disciplinary comparisons. For example, he declares that canon "attempts to be what C. S. Peirce called the 'final interpretant'—the ultimate meaning of the text." He also employs Jorge Luis Borges' satirical story of "Pierre Menard" to illumine the Christian adoption of the Septuagint.

Aichele's inventive readings would gain in plausibility if he demonstrated greater acquaintance with the history of exegesis of the passages he seeks to interpret. This would spare the reader numerous undocumented generalizations such as, "Over the centuries this [interpretation of Gen 11:1–9] has been a widespread view." Furthermore, the reduction of the historical to the ideological poses difficulty for the success of his arguments. One is perplexed to witness his frequent reliance upon *nonideological* secondary-source reconstructions of history to demonstrate his theoretical claims regarding the development and functions of the Christian canon. When these historical examples do not adequately support his claims, he appeals uncritically to "the ideal of canon." Ironically, Aichele's depreciation of history risks the historical irrelevance of his own creative hermeneutical contributions to the Christian community.

Charles J. Scalise
Fuller Theological Seminary

Mouw, Richard J. *He Shines in All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. Pp. 101. \$14.00.

Professor Mouw attempts three goals in this informative book about common grace. First, he systematically explores the goodness—the grace—of God manifest in the entire creation. He wants Christians and

secularists to work together to bring wholeness to a fragmenting world. Accordingly, Mouw points to the biblical fact that God works in all that is just, beautiful, and true, hence the significance of the title.

He next explores the relationship between sin and grace, for it is sin that distorts all that is fair. The deep, abiding, disruptive effects of sin create a significant theological and logistical problem however for one desiring commonality. Dare we cooperate with an increasingly secular culture? The answer to this question will inform the integrity of our witness.

His third goal is to attempt to show the interrelationship between special and common grace. Mouw wants to show the deep interconnection between the salvation God offers to humans and the providential care God exercises on behalf of the entire creation. Mouw's Calvinistic faith is manifest throughout this six-chapter book.

While Mouw admirably motivates us to seek commonality, he rightly warns us of some of the dangers of such bonds. Are Christians squeezed into compromising the exclusivity of our faith as the result of commonality? Are we tempted to think that *we* bring healing, thus denying the *sola gratia* of our Christian faith? Most importantly, can Christians form bonds that provide an *integral* relationship between salvation and providence? Mouw argues in the affirmative as the following quote shows, "I am insisting that as God unfolds his (sic) plan for his creation, he is interested in more than one thing. Alongside of God's clear concern about the eternal destiny of individuals are his designs for the larger creation."

Mouw further shows that there are eternal consequences for our works of common and special grace. For example he speaks of *Revelation* 21:24-26, "... the apostle foresees that the nations of the earth will walk by the light of the Holy City, '*and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. . . . People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.*'" This idea of the eternity of works done in and for Christ is one of the stronger insights of the book.

The relevance for ministry in our post-September 11 world should not go unnoticed. Our culture welcomes Christian good works while it intolerantly denies our full public enfranchisement. Perspective therefore effects understandings of "good." For example, most would say fighting poverty is "good." But how many would say that fighting abortions is "good?" But secular culture is not the only problem. Mouw asks, can Christians make unique, compassionate contributions without falling into incivility?

Mouw woos us winsomely to the cause of united efforts through his clear, forceful writing. However, he fails to develop adequately *the* key insight: the tie between special and common grace. This lack is ironic since it was

Abraham Kuyper who struggled so mightily to establish this link. Mouw tells us *that* we should take common and special grace seriously and relate the two. But he does not tell us *how* to overcome the tensions that prohibit smooth passages.

There are Calvinistic resources to address this problem systematically that Mouw fails to cultivate. Speaking of Kuyper's magnificent triumph, professor S. U. Zuidema in "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," in *Communication and Confrontation* says it this way, ". . . the happy hour arrived when he set forth that Christ as the Mediator of Redemption not only may lay claim to the central, spiritual core of man, but also is in principle the new Root of all created reality and the Head, the new Head, of the human race."

Here is the central root for uniting common and special grace. Christ—the all-encompassing expression of the sovereign love of God—commands us by his example to offer the *new creation new life*.

Robert A. Wauzzinski
Ball State University

Davis, Ellen F. *Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament*. Cambridge: Cowley, 2001. Pp. 208. \$13.95.

In this collection of seventeen essays and sermons, Ellen Davis, professor of Bible and Practical Theology at Duke Divinity School, models what she calls a "spiritually engaged" reading of the Old Testament that seeks to uncover insights about intimacy with God. The subtitle to the book appropriately reflects the rediscovery process that one might experience through engagement with the Old Testament. Readers may find that the Old Testament they thought they knew well contains rich and provocative stories probing the nature of God rather than stiff moral teachings and rules. It offers descriptions of a God who is lovingly and intimately involved with humans rather than distant and aloof. Davis invites readers to consider that maybe there is more to the Old Testament than they first realized.

Discovery through spiritually engaged reading, says Davis, requires *slowing down*. Instead of quickly reading through a story to find out the resolution to the plot or the moral lesson presented, Davis urges readers to take time to ask questions of the text and to struggle patiently with it. In the introduction, she explains that one should read not just to uncover *what* the text says but *why* the Bible presents things in particular ways. Her essays then show in specific ways how to ask such questions. For example, in the story of the binding of Isaac, Davis asks, why does the Old Testament risk putting off its readers so

early in the Bible by featuring a deeply troubling portrayal of God? Through her observant retelling of this story, Davis shows us how much it reveals about the nature of God and how "we need to know what kind of God we must reckon with, and what might happen to us in that reckoning." In this and the other essays, she highlights God's intimacy by considering the points of view of human characters as well as the perspectives of God. Her observations about the story of the burning bush focus less on Moses, as is typical in treatments of this story, and more on God's thoughts and feelings, leading her to find that God is one who gets "derailed" for the sake of human beings.

Even in better-known stories of Abraham and Moses and the prophets, Davis reveals that the process of discovery and rediscovery can continue for those who slow down and ask new questions of the text. The Bible encourages involvement and discovery because it leaves "so much imaginative and emotional work for its readers." Davis also guides readers to discover parts of the Old Testament that are less familiar to us like the cursing psalms, psalms of lament, and erotic imagery of the Song of Songs. She shows that the wisdom books are also profoundly theological, surprising those who may have assumed otherwise. While the majority of essays and sermons focus on particular texts or types of biblical writings, the final two reflect on the "Torah of the Earth," drawing from various parts of the Old Testament to highlight the contemporary issue of the *theological* crisis in ecology.

Davis's essays are carefully crafted and yet conversational and inviting. She offers profound and creative insights in a readable way, not giving the impression that she has offered the last word but that readers will find out even more about a relationship with God by slowly pondering and savoring the nourishing texts of the Old Testament. Moreover, Davis's palpable love for this material and her deep familiarity with it will inspire pastors and other ministers to contemplate the Old Testament with renewed vigor, and to make new discoveries to share with others who want to know more about God.

Jennifer S. Green
Princeton Theological Seminary

Klauck, Hans-Josef. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000. Pp. 516. \$59.95.

Klauck's recently translated *The Religious Context of Early Christianity* attempts to do the impossible: transport the interpreter back into the world(s) in which earliest Christianity took hold and developed. Producing a portrait of this world that is detailed enough to avoid wholesale reductionism and yet concise enough

to be useful for nonspecialists is a tall order, with little hope of pleasing everybody all the time. Klauck takes on this difficult task, and despite several areas with deficiencies, succeeds remarkably well in providing a serviceable guide.

The uniqueness of this overview is that Klauck's familiarity with issues specific to New Testament interpretation allows him to give additional focus to areas of intersection between the two fields, in a way that other surveys with broader readerships often do not. The downside to this approach is that the rich diversity among individual religions and philosophies gets less attention than it deserves. But Klauck's up-to-date bibliographies, which refer to numerous works in German and French, as well as in English, direct the reader access to materials that give more depth than Klauck's focus allows.

The book consists of six parts: I) Civic and Domestic Religion, II) The Mystery Cults, III) Astrology, Soothsaying, Miracles, Magic, IV) The Cult of Rulers and Emperors, V) Philosophy and Religion, and VI) The Gnostic Transformation. The introduction sets the book in the trajectory of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, albeit with a much broader concern than simply discerning dependencies and influence, and with much greater circumspection as to how these etiologically judgments are to be made. Unfortunately, Klauck's overview of methodological issues falls short of being even a cursory treatment of the tremendous impact of this theory on the designation and interpretation of the data. Here especially Klauck's discussion lacks the type of analysis required by our postmodern milieu.

Part I provides an overview of religious life in the city and in the home. Klauck opens with a treatment of the sacrificial cult, including a look at the various rites, temples, priests, and feasts, followed by a short discussion of different theories of sacrifice. He then turns to the topics of *religio domestica* and voluntary religious associations. Part I concludes with an investigation of the more specific phenomenon of the cult of the dead. In general, Klauck tends to deal predominantly with texts, and his selection and use of them is often quite illuminating and effective. However, in my judgment, this method of presentation seems to preclude a sophisticated role for nontextual materials (such as architecture, iconography, etc.) in his reconstruction, particularly when it comes to using these materials to reveal opposing viewpoints not fully disclosed in the texts.

Part II discusses the mystery cults, with a focus on the cults of Eleusis, Dionysus, Attis, Isis, and Mithras. Klauck begins with a helpful overview of the terminology associated with them, particularly where it overlaps with Judeo-Christian vocabulary. He continues with an abstracted phenomenological description of all the mysteries together, which unfortunately leaves one with the general impression that they more or less consti-

tute a monolithic whole. This misrepresentation is corrected somewhat once Klauck begins to treat each cult individually. But again the preference for texts over artifacts gives a picture of overall uniformity that the diverse archaeological record does not support. Likewise, a greater discussion of the social location and posture of the mystery cults vis-à-vis the traditional religion of the Roman Empire would have been helpful to draw comparisons to the social locations of Jews and Christians, as well as to understand the individual mysteries in their own right. Thankfully, Klauck also includes a helpful discussion regarding the extent to which mystery cults might have influenced the NT, particularly in the articulations of the sacraments and the resurrection.

Part III addresses a panoply of popular beliefs, including astrology, sooth-saying, miracles, and magic. The section on miracles offers an insightful extended discussion of the cult of Asclepius and a comparison between it and the miracles depicted in the NT. Two subsections follow, one discussing Apollonius of Tyana and the other the concept of "divine man," both of which Klauck connects to early debates about the person and work of Jesus. Klauck concludes Part III with subsections on prognostication, the interpretation of dreams and signs, magic, and a particularly fine treatment of astrology, including its political significance.

In Part IV Klauck turns to a slightly different notion of a divinized human being, namely, the one found in the various cults of rulers and emperors. The first two subsections cover the Hellenistic cult of rulers and the Roman imperial cults. Most helpful are the last two subsections, in which Klauck discusses the forms (sacrifices, mysteries, images, priests, feasts, and temples) and diffusion of the imperial cult, as well as its intersection with earliest Christianity. The latter section in particular shows a greater sensitivity to the specific problems created by how we define religion, and it does an excellent job of providing a sympathetic and coherent account of the imperial cult on its own terms.

Part V turns to the issue of philosophy and religion in the Greco-Roman world, with a focus on Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Middle Platonism. Somewhat surprisingly, Cynicism is only treated as a small subsection within the treatment of Stoicism, and its controversial application to Jesus and his followers by some recent NT scholars gets almost no treatment at all. Similarly lacking is the presence of Philo in the discussion of Middle Platonism, an absence unfortunately consistent with the overall decision to bracket out Second Temple Judaism(s) from this study. Finally, some mention of Neopythagoreanism would have been helpful as well, since it was not discussed in Klauck's earlier treatment of Apollonius of Tyana.

Perhaps the best and most unique part of this book is Part VI, in which

Klauck treats Gnosticism. He begins with an overview of the relevance of the topic, particularly to NT studies, and proceeds with a thorough overview of the available sources and the crucial question of origins. Klauck follows this with an indepth outline of Gnosticism's doctrinal system, devoting subsections to cosmology, anthropology, soteriology, eschatology, ecclesiology, and ethics. Overall, this is a very helpful treatment of an issue with perennial importance to NT interpretation and the history of Christianity.

Klauck has done a commendable job undertaking a difficult task, and my critiques presuppose the genuine worth and helpfulness of his work. This book is a welcome contribution, and it is likely to be of particular value for NT scholars for some time to come.

Jason J. Ripley
Princeton Theological Seminary

Gill, Robin, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. 290. \$60.00.

For a number of years, Cambridge University Press has produced a well-received "Companion" series on various theological topics. That fine series continues with this latest volume on Christian ethics. This volume, in keeping with the style of the series, serves as a guided tour of the various contours of the discipline of Christian ethics. It exposes readers to the historical background of particular topics, and draws contemporary implications for ethics in contemporary situations.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first explores the grounds of Christian ethics as it relates to biblical hermeneutics. The second part focuses on various aspects of Christian ethics, from natural law theory to liberation ethics. In the third part, Christian ethics is explored in terms of relevant issues facing the Christian community, including war, ecology, and bioethics. None of the contributions to this volume is a disappointment. Several, however, deserve special mention.

In his article, "The Gospels and Christian Ethics," Timothy Jackson reveals the unique make-up of New Testament ethics by comparing its characteristics to that of its Gnostic rivals. Exploring the differences in the conception of love, sin, and salvation found in the teachings of the canonical Gospels and those found in various noncanonical Gnostic documents, Jackson amply demonstrates that "metaphysical beliefs have consequences." Jackson's analysis argues that Gnostic writings and teachings failed to be received by the mainstream Christian community for good reasons. They are not

merely the result of power politics within the early Church, as the situation is often characterized.

Stephen Pope conducts the reader on a whirlwind tour of the history of natural law theory in "Natural Law and Christian Ethics." Pope then slows his pace and provides a fine introduction to the thought of Thomas Aquinas. He then examines the rise of nominalism and the ethic of volunteerism that it spawned. He also characterizes Luther's doctrine of God as one of "omnipotence, inscrutability, and arbitrariness." Following Pope's article, Jean Porter presents the history and contours of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics typically center on habits of action (character) that are related to what are perceived to be the intrinsic goods of human life or of a given community. Virtue ethics are often contrasted with more deontological or rule-based ethics that typically validate human action on the basis of universal laws.

In "Christian Ethics: A Jewish Response," Ronald Green, who identifies himself as a "Jewish Christian ethicist," examines Christian ethics from a Jewish point of view. From this standpoint Green illuminates aspects of Christian ethics that Christians are prone to overlook, and provides a helpful primer on Jewish ethical thought. Green proceeds to explore the differences between the two great traditions in terms of three categories: "law vs. ethics," "universality vs. particularity," and "valuation of suffering vs. aversion to suffering." The last of these comparisons is interesting because Green applies it to contemporary bioethical debates. The traditional Christian tolerance for suffering, based on the example of Jesus and the saints, advocates certain position on matters of bio-technology and end-of-life treatment that contrasts with contemporary Jewish thought.

Michael Northcott delineates a very helpful theology of creation and of creation's redemption in his contribution on ecology and Christian ethics. Northcott is critical of Christian theologies or secular ideologies that conceive of nature as having "no intrinsic moral or teleological significance." Appealing to the doctrines of the incarnation and the resurrection, Northcott demonstrates that Christian theology has, in spite of popular characterizations and genuine missteps, unique resources for a just and realistic valuation of the natural world.

In "Business, Economics, and Christian Ethics," Max Stackhouse provides a welcome response to those theologies that "view contemporary economic life as essentially foreign to the faith," or that look to Marxist ideologies as the only viable alternative to the alleged greed-motivation of modern corporate economics. Describing and then employing the principles of "public theology" with which he is associated, Stackhouse explores the roots of economic life in both the biblical witness and historical record. He contends that the human association we know as the corporation and the human activity we know as technology largely

generate contemporary economic life. If ethicists are to avoid alienating these human endeavors from theological vision—and thus alienating much of contemporary life from the claims of theological vision—then the creative origins and redemptive possibilities of these endeavors need to be explored and embraced.

Most of these essays are well written. Each contributor produces a genuinely Christian perspective on their topics. They seek to relate Christian ethics to Christian doctrine in a positive manner. Gill has demonstrated the benefits of reappropriating the rich Christian doctrinal inheritance for contemporary ethical reflection.

James McCullough
Princeton, NJ

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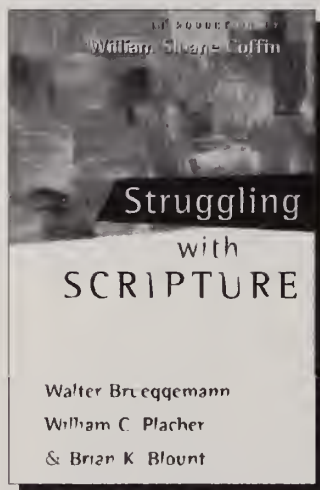
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Walter Brueggemann is William Marcellus McPheeters Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary. His most recent books from Westminster John Knox Press include *First and Second Samuel* (Interpretation), *Isaiah* (2 volumes) (Westminster Bible Companion), *Cadences of Home*, and *The Bible Make Sense*.

William C. Placher is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana. He is the author of *Unapologetic Theology*; *Readings in the History of Christian Theology* (2 volumes); *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction*; and *Jesus the Savior*, all from Westminster John Knox Press.

Brian K. Blount is Associate Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary. His recent publications include *Making Room at the Table*, coedited with Nora Tubbs Tisdale.

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